

FIRST EDITION

JUNE, 1945.

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MY STUDENT DAYS
IN
AMERICA

P R E F A C E

AMERICA is very much in the foreground today. And during the long hours we spent together as political prisoners in the Nagpur Central Jail, some of my friends wished that I should tell them of my experiences in the New World. This is a summary of about twenty such talks given between February and July of 1943. There are no doubt several books on America. This does not purport to be one such. It is merely an intimate fireside chat with friends, limiting itself strictly to what I myself saw and felt. There was no need, therefore, to refer to books. Nor could I, placed as I was, where I had practically no access to them. As I was not released from jail till January 1945, this book could not be published earlier.

One must not look in this, therefore, for an exhaustive description of every aspect of American life. I have said nothing for instance about American Politics, not because it is not important, but because I did not interest myself in it. The only contact I had with it was at the time of Harding's election as President of the United States, when Cox who was a rival candidate was passing through Hartford, Conn., on his election campaign. I was at the railway station, when Cox stood outside his compartment shaking hands with everybody. A man standing next to me in the crowd said he would vote for Cox. I was interested and asked why. He replied that he had just shaken hands with Cox. So if Cox became President he could say that he had shaken hands with the President of the United States. Perhaps this is not a fair representation of what the vote stands for in the much boosted democratic countries. But it has its moral.

I have often had to explain what will appear as commonplace matters to Western readers. That is because I was speaking to friends for whom these things were new.

As I am wedded to village industries and believe that our salvation lies in reviving cottage production rather than in following the centralised methods of the industrialised West, I

PREFACE

have let myself go against large scale methods in industry in my treatment of New York City. For, frankly, my aim has not been merely to entertain or inform but also to draw a moral, as today in India we need to reflect on how best to rebuild our national life.

Wardha,

March, 1945.

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Bharatan Kumarappa

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1 CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

MY going to the United States was an accident, as, I suppose, most events which have far-reaching consequences on our lives usually are. Many of my brothers and sisters had been there and I imagined that when I grew up I should also be sent there. This fact sufficed to make me lose interest in going to America, for after all it is when we do something not done by others and when it happens to us unexpectedly that it thrills us. I was much more interested in going to England, for only one of my brothers, J. C. Kumarappa, had studied there, and I knew that in India English degrees had a greater market value than American. I was happy therefore when in July 1919 I set sail for England, and it was decided that I should study there.

IN LONDON

After arrival in England in August, I saw the Principal of King's College, London, about my studies and he advised me that if I wanted to save a year I should start on Greek straight away. As college opened only in October I determined to learn as much Greek as I could before then and invested on a copy of the Deigma. I knew no one in London. I did not go to the hostels to which Indian students generally go when they are strangers to London, but stayed in the lodgings in which my brother had lived, and so I was much to myself, and the Deigma was my companion morning, evening, noon and night.

This however was not to be for long, for only a week had passed thus, when, lo and behold, on a Saturday afternoon as I was walking up and down in the commons in front of my lodgings, the inevitable Deigma in hand, I suddenly looked up from my book to find to my surprise Kirubaldas Appasamy, my brother-in-law's brother and a good chum of mine during school and college in India. He had arrived only that morning from India with 5 or 6 other Indian students and was bound for the United States. Kirubaldas and the Deigma were incompatibles. I had to choose between them. I was lonely and very homesick. So the Deigma found its way to the bottom of the trunk and I went with Kirubaldas to Russell Square to fetch his things and installed him duly in my room. I bought a copy of the map

of London and from that day every morning, evening, noon and night found me trudging the streets of London with Kirubaldas as my inseparable companion.

Kirubaldas was soon to proceed to America. I thought why not I also go with him. He had brought with him a cable which had reached my people in India from a Theological Seminary in Hartford, Conn., U. S. A., offering me their very best scholarship. It was a temptation and I fell. I made up my mind to go with him. Thus do trifles weigh with us and lead us to take steps which have important consequences on us later.

AT HAVRE

We rushed off to Cooks to book our passage. As it was soon after the War, and at the end of summer, it was difficult to secure berths except in a French boat sailing from Havre. Colleges in America open in the third or fourth week of September, and as it was already early in September, we could not afford to wait. We took the berths and paid our money. We went to Havre, passed through all the tedious formalities of medical examination, and just as we picked up our things and walked up to the gangway to embark, we were informed that there was no accommodation for us, as at the last minute the United States Government had cabled commandeering the boat for transshipping American troops back to the United States. Our annoyance and disappointment knew no bounds as we saw the boat glide away from the wharf without us.

It was evening and it was getting dark. We were strangers to Havre and by signs and gestures—as we did not know French—we inquired where we could go for the night. We were told that the Compagnie Generale Trans Atlantique, by whose boat we were to sail for America, ran a “hotel” for its passengers. We found our way there only to discover that it was a kind of free shelter intended for poor emigrants who awaited a passage to America. It was full of men, women and children. Single men like us were crowded together in a huge hall. The people were dirty, and the food—supplied free—was of the simplest and most inexpensive. We could not stick it for more than that night, and left the next morning for Paris leaving instructions that we should be informed at Paris as soon as passage was available for us.

FROM BORDEAUX WITH EMIGRANTS

After 5 or 6 days in Paris, news came that we could be accommodated in a boat sailing from Bordeaux. To Bordeaux therefore we went, and after many signs and symbols, for no one there knew a word of English, we actually were on board the S. S. Niagara, a small cargo boat rocking and defying its way across the Atlantic. Our fellow passengers were emigrants from Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Armenia, Italy, Belgium and such like, and spoke every language under the sun except English. We were fed on black bread, soup and black coffee.

NEW YORK IN SIGHT

After full 10 days—a period twice as long as passenger boats usually take to cross the Atlantic—we woke up one fine morning hearing excited reports that New York was in sight. We rushed on deck and what did we find? Not anything like what we had seen till now. Buildings for miles, high and low, one 40 or 50 storeys high, another adjoining it but 6 or 7 storeys, presenting the most jagged skyline imaginable. They seemed like deal wood boxes of various sizes lined up side by side—big and small, tall and short, broad and narrow—ill-assorted and piled up anyhow. I suppose they looked like boxes because they had flat tops and not sloping tiled roofs such as we were used to. We could hardly believe our eyes. This New World was indeed new. The buildings were a pearly white and looked fresh as compared with the dull grey buildings we had left behind. This, we discovered later was owing to the fact that New York was particular about preserving its complexion and had decreed that no smoke-emitting fuel was to be used in the city or near about.

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

We glided gently along, approaching nearer and nearer the city, when again there was a stir, and all eyes were fixed on a huge figure dominating the scene and welcoming us, it seemed, to this new land. It was the Statue of Liberty holding in one hand outstretched to the sky the torch of Liberty, which shone like brandished gold against the early morning sun. We who came from lands in bondage or had been enslaved by the rich

MY STUDENT DAYS IN AMERICA

were thrilled at the thought that our bonds were not to hold us now. We felt we had indeed reached the haven of freedom. America seemed to say to us of the Old World, come all ye that are oppressed, down-trodden and enslaved, and I will set you free. We glowed at the thought and wondered what it would be like to shed off our chains and walk the streets of America as free men equal to any other.

IN A POLICE VAN

Soon our boat cast anchor and we expected to be ashore in a few minutes. We awaited our turn to get a permit to land, when to our dismay we discovered that there was some hitch. We were asked to wait a little. We grew impatient. Finally we were allowed to land, only to be marched straight off into a Police van and to be put under armed escort. What luck! We who glowed a few minutes ago at the thought of enjoying freedom we had never known—now to walk into the jaws of the American Police ! This was my first experience of being locked up, and paradoxically enough my first experience of the Land of Liberty. Was liberty only for the people of the land and not for us strangers? Was it only for the whites and not for the coloured ? We felt disillusioned. It seemed a cruel mockery. We were rushed off in the van to a steam launch which took us to Ellis Island off the coast of New York City.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMMIGRANTS

THIS was a little island where nothing existed but a few buildings which accommodated immigrants who sought entrance to the United States. There were dormitories for men and women, equipped with beds, a huge common room where they could sit and talk or read, a dining hall where they were provided with food, and a theatre for cinemas and entertainments—all provided gratis to the inmates. But what was all this to freedom? Nothing interested us but the trial that awaited us, and the decision as to whether we were to be deported back to India or set free. The case of those around us was even worse. They came from various parts of Europe, could not talk English to find out what it was all about, they had come with their wives and children, hoping to make a fortune in this land of the Almighty Dollar. They scraped up just enough money to pay their passage and had burnt their boats. There was nothing for them to return to, if deported. What was to be their fate? Despondency was stamped on their faces.

OUR TRIAL

We were the first to be dealt with. There was a court room in this place, where three judges sat. We were given the Bible in one hand, and with the other upraised, we were told to swear that we would speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Enquiries were then made in regard to our purpose for coming to the United States, whether we had secured admission to American colleges, the state of our finances, whether we were married, and whether we believed in polygamy! Satisfied that we were *bona fide* students, they decided to permit us to land, and gave us a pass. Our joy knew no bounds. We waved good-bye to our companions from Europe who looked dejected and forlorn. Perhaps they thought that as, unlike them, we belonged to the bourgeois class we had the preference. We were Asiatics and yet had the right over them. The world it would seem was for the privileged classes, whatever their colour or race; while the working class, even though white-skinned, had to stand by and await the crumbs that may fall to their lot.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

We soon discovered, however, that no such socialist conclusion could be drawn. If we were let off first, it was only because we were mere students—there to-day, off tomorrow—not so the others. They intended to settle in the United States. They and their children and their children's children would go to make the future America. It mattered much to America therefore whether they were allowed to land or not. America had a unique problem on its hands. It was faced with waves and waves of immigrants flooding its shores. Unlike most foreigners who visited America we had the privilege of observing the phenomenon first hand, as we travelled with such emigrants from Europe and shared their experiences in Ellis Island. America's method in regard to this problem was two-fold. One was Immigration quotas and laws, whereby it restricted immigration to such as in its opinion could be easily absorbed into its body politic. Its order of preference was somewhat as follows:—(1) English speaking whites of Britain and the British Empire, (2) North European peoples, and (3) Mediterranean Europeans. In accordance with this preference, the quota of immigrants from each country was fixed, the first obtaining naturally a higher quota than the last.

Asiatics and Africans were unwanted as immigrants as they were considered unassimilable. Of Asiatics, the most popular in America were the Chinese, in whom America took much interest. To Hindus—as all Indians were called, to distinguish them from Red Indians who were for short spoken of in America as Indians—America adopted an attitude of neutrality. It felt that India was a preserve of Britain, and that therefore the only proper attitude for it to adopt was that of a passive onlooker. If at all Americans showed any interest in India it was as a land of magic and mysticism, where Yogis sat in caves, grew long nails, slept on a bed of spikes, and told people's fortune! The Japanese appeared to be viewed with suspicion and distrust in the United States. You could always tell a Japanese student from a Chinese in that while the Chinese seemed open and joyous, the Japanese were usually quiet, reticent and morose like a child grown sullen because it sensed that it was unwanted.

To revert to the topic we were discussing, one of the ways whereby America tackled the problem of immigration was to

keep out nationalities which it regarded as difficult to absorb within itself, or people who might be considered undesirable in other ways. It was this sorting and sifting that took place in Ellis Island.

AMERICANISATION

Once these immigrants were permitted, it was not as though they were left free to get absorbed into the nation as best as they could. The Government saw to it that they were duly Americanised, that is, that they lost all trace of their original nationality and became American in language, outlook and habits. This it did by the second method, usually known as Americanisation, which it adopted in relation to them. According to this, classes were conducted to teach English to the adult immigrant and to get him to understand and take pride in American History and traditions. The immigrant was put through the grind so successfully that in a generation he became completely Americanised, and there was nothing to distinguish him from those who had settled in the country generations earlier. Rightly indeed had America in this respect been described as the melting pot of nations. Americanisation was the ruthless process whereby America saw to it that the old Adam perished and a new Adam according to its own pre-determined pattern emerged.

THE ANCIENT INDIAN WAY OF ASSIMILATION

India also had had periodical waves of immigration from the North West. But true to its genius of non-violence and tolerance it did not seek to force all into one uniform pattern, but allowed each to develop in its own distinctive way, and yet influenced them all by its own unique heritage; so that while transforming them and making them peculiarly Indian, it yet succeeded in preserving what was distinctive of each. So clothes, food, language, customs vary from North to South, or East to West, or even from community to community within the same geographical area. Nevertheless there is a cultural unity which pervades the communities and makes them one. Religion, art, literature, philosophy and all that we call culture is in India a rich unity in diversity—not a bare uniformity as it is in America. In the United States, the English, the German, the French, the Russian, the Italian and the Turk lose their

national genius and heritage to become an entirely new creature—the American. Americanisation is a thorough going, speedy and violent rooting out of all differences—so typical of the West and the machine age. Ours was the slow, non-violent way of mutual respect and tolerance—typical of an agricultural civilisation.

THE GOVERNMENT IN RELATION TO NATIONAL UNITY IN INDIA

Another contrast which America presented to India in regard to the problem of unification of heterogeneous elements in the country was the fact that this problem of unification was not left by the Government in the United States, as it was in India, to be handled or not by private effort. The United States Government saw to it that diverse elements within the nation fused and became one, and that right quickly. It would brook no nonsense in this matter. The Government of India, however, stands passively by even if it does not deliberately keep the warring elements apart and at daggers drawn towards each other. It washes its hands off the problem, saying it is purely a matter for the people concerned to effect the unity. Can the unity of the country be so little the concern of its Government? No, it can be so only when the Government has interests of its own, to pursue which it is necessary to keep the people disunited. Is it not for this reason that Gandhiji insists that to solve the Hindu-Muslim question, the British should give up power in India? It is only a national Government that can and will do all in its power to unify the people. It may be that such a Government will have to learn much from this method of Americanisation which the United States Government has adopted to make its people one. With the forces of Government in our hands, it cannot be difficult to educate both young and old of our warring communities, Hindu or Muslim, touchable or untouchable into toleration and appreciation of each other, and to instil into them a spirit of common nationality. The problem is surely much easier than the problem of synthesising altogether foreign and extraneous elements which America is tackling so effectively in a phenomenally short period of time.

All this is incidental. We must pick up the thread where we left it and bid good-bye to Ellis Island and its immigrants.

We walked triumphantly into the steam launch which took us across to the mainland. But, alas, not so happily as we had anticipated, for we began to think—what next? Where shall we go, where stay, who will give us food? Freedom when it came was not as attractive as it seemed when it was denied to us. It brought with it many problems.

3 New York City, The Citadel of Industrialism

CENTRALISATION

LUCKILY for us there was an organisation in New York City, called the Committee for Friendly Relations among Foreign Students, known in short as the Friendly Relations Committee. We got into touch with it by 'phone. It was not by accident that our first contact with America was through a centralised organisation such as this. For America represented the furthest advance towards centralisation in industry, and in New York City such centralisation came to a head. We shall obtain an insight into American life if in what follows we look at New York City, therefore, from the point of view of centralised organisation and the many ways in which such centralisation affects the life of the people.

It was a strange thing to have an organisation for establishing friendship between students. But this was America and America had a genius for organisation. Everything in this country was centralised, planned and directed by experts, including friendship, so it would seem! Anyhow, we were thankful for this organisation, for no sooner we landed on the mainland than we were greeted with a smile by one of its representatives who took charge of us and all our problems. We so completely threw all our burdens on him that I do not now remember what happened next. For is it not one of the laws of life that so long as things are done for us they make no impression on us? It is only as we struggle for ourselves and find our own solutions that we grow and develop. Similarly work that taxes the imagination, thought and creative ability develops the individual, as for example in cottage industries, where the individual owns and controls his unit of production. Not so, in centralised factory manufacture, where the individual is part of a huge organisation and has thus no need to think and act for himself. Organisations are useful if they aid individual effort, but unfortunately they have a way of growing out of all proportion till they thwart and crush the individual, and usurp his place, making him in the end of no effect. America, which, of all countries, shows the greatest

tendency to large scale centralised organisation, has the most to beware in this regard.

BROOKLYN Y.M.C.A.

Our friend took us to the Brooklyn Young Men Christian Association or Y.M.C.A. for short, the largest in the world—a miniature town in itself—containing everything imaginable—library, readingroom, theatre, cinema, lecture rooms, gymnasium, swimming pool, restaurant, books and stationery, post and telegraph facilities, telephone, shops and laundry, as well as accommodation for about a thousand men. It was several storeys high—perhaps 30 or 40. We were to stay there for the night. The institution was an experience in itself and we were baffled by its enormity.

The Y.M.C.A. though born in England is much more advanced, widespread and better run in America than in the country of its origin. I remember going to a Y.M.C.A. in London, when I was an absolute stranger to that city and asking for a place to stay—as I used to do in the United States. I was asked whether I was a member, as rooms were available only for members. I replied that if I had been a resident of London and could be a member, I should not need the room. The management was wooden, and said that it had no option but to abide by its rules. I turned away in disgust and thought how much more sensible the Y.M.C.A.s in America were, who threw their doors open to all, more especially to the stranger who most needed to be befriended. Surely one could not be expected to become a member of the local Y.M.C.A. by paying the usual membership fee, if one wanted shelter there only for a day or two. America was not so bound by red tape as England was.

STREETS

Having left our things in our room, we proceeded to look round the city. The streets afforded a striking contrast to those of London, for they were straight and well planned, unlike the streets of London which, for all one could see, might have been built over cow-tracks winding as they did here and there without plan or purpose. A few main avenues stretched across the length of New York from North to South; and at right angles to the avenues ran the streets from East to West.

The streets bore numbers instead of names. Thus East 32nd Street or West 32nd Street according as the same street ran east or west of 5th Avenue which stretched through the heart of New York City. It was the easiest thing in the world therefore to find a house in this huge city, as one knew from the number of the street and of the house precisely where it was located. In London, on the other hand, there was no saying from the name of the street where it may be found. Grosvenor Street may be in one district of the city and Grosvenor Square miles away in another corner altogether. Besides, the same street may assume in London many names as it goes along, as though it were not bad enough for one street to have one name. The hopeless futility of giving names instead of numbers to identify streets may be realised by an analogy. Suppose for instance instead of houses in Bombay having numbers, each house had a name of its own and some houses had separate names even for each floor of the house, how would we know from the name of the house its locality in relation to other houses in the same street? The New Yorker thinks it just as foolish to give names instead of numbers to streets. No doubt names lend a charm of their own, and often have historical associations. But America is too matter-of-fact and free from historical traditions to trouble about such considerations when they come in the way of efficiency and convenience. This complete freedom from convention and tradition, and adoption of whatever makes for efficiency is one of the distinguishing characteristics of America as compared with the Old World, and accounts for her being able to forge ahead of Europe and Asia.

TRAFFIC

To us who are used to traffic keeping to the left of the road, New York traffic is rather baffling as it rushes along on the right of the road. The effect is altogether unhinging as though the whole world were going the wrong way. And yet it is not New York that is perverse, in this respect, but the British Empire, for it is only in the British Empire that traffic keeps to the left. Once you get used in other countries to keeping to the right of the road and crossed over to England and saw the traffic there keeping to the left you felt just as odd as you would if everybody suddenly began eating and writing with his left hand and expected you to do the same.

In New York every conceivable labour saving device is adopted. While in London hundreds of policemen are employed to control and direct traffic, New York manages its enormous street-traffic without a single policeman. The whole works automatically by means of mechanical signposts. Every two minutes cars running north-south are allowed to pass the cross roads, and the next two minutes those running east-west. Take for instance a car going north-south. After it has left the crossing, the east-west traffic begins and goes on for two minutes. During this period the north-south car manages to reach the next crossing just in time to be allowed to continue on its way, for after those two minutes it is the turn of the north-south traffic to pass. The distance between these crossings is such that it takes two minutes of driving at the regulation speed to go from one crossing to another, and as there is no point in driving faster and reaching the crossing earlier, for it will only entail waiting there till the two minutes elapse, the cars keep to the required speed without any police control. What is more, they run almost continuously at a uniform speed without having to stop. Thus there is a saving of labour, petrol and time. In London, on the other hand, in spite of all its well trained police, endless delay is caused by traffic congestion during rush hours, and one feels at times that one can get quicker to one's destination by getting out of one's conveyance and walking.

SUBWAYS AND OVERHEAD TRAINS

The quickest mode of getting about whether in New York or in London is of course the subway, where the problem of traffic congestion and consequent delay does not arise. In London the underground trains run deep down in the bowels of the earth owing perhaps to the fact that the nature of the top soil in London is clayey. Laying the lines so much below the surface and even under the foundations of buildings must have cost a great deal. New York, on the other hand, is built on rock and therefore it has chosen wisely to run the trains directly under its main roads. The American subway is therefore not so marvellous in construction as the English underground, nor perhaps anything as expensive. Nevertheless it serves the purpose just as well. One is thrilled when one sees on a notice stuck in the compartment that four million people use the subway every day.

In addition to surface traffic and the subway there are overhead railways. But these are not popular as they have to have constructions like bridges running along the length of the road and making the road practically useless for ordinary traffic. Besides they shut off light and air from the second and third floors of houses and cause a great deal of noise.

NOISE

Noise there is in plenty in New York City. Noise from overhead trains, noise from trams, buses and cars, noise from people walking with heeled shoes on stone sidewalks, noise from newspaper boys and pedlars, noise in subway trains, noise from typewriters and telephones in offices, noise of machinery in factories, noise in shops, noise from dishes and cutlery in restaurants, and noise from radios in hotels, clubs and parks. Noise, noise everywhere. No wonder the New Yorker rushes along nervously as though his house were on fire. No wonder also that in respectable apartments, where middle class people live, you come across the shocking notice "Dogs and children not allowed". The New Yorker's nerves are too shattered to bear the noise of barking dogs and crying children, and as a last resort he bans them from his rooms, preferring the silence of the graveyard to the prattle of children.

MARRIAGE

Let us follow the New Yorker to his room. He is probably a bachelor as he cannot afford to marry. Living in New York is at least twice as expensive as in London, and as a young man in America is expected to look after himself and not depend on his parents or parents-in-law he puts off marriage indefinitely. This is dangerous for New York is full of allurements for the unwary, and often he gets to a stage where having tasted of the pleasures of a libertine, he sees little point in marrying, restricting his attentions to one woman and putting himself to the expense of feeding, clothing and maintaining her. The tendency therefore is for men and women in this New World to remain single. It is said that fifty per cent of marriageable persons in the United States never marry. If, however, nature is too strong in a man, and at a moment of weakness he rushes into marriage without counting the cost, what happens? He avoids getting children for he cannot afford the expense of

bringing them up. So man and wife lead a desolate life. As the woman has little or no work to do in the house, and as money is always welcome, she also works.

WOMAN VERSUS MAN

In fact, more and more, women are displacing men in many spheres of work—in offices, hotels, restaurants, banks, shops, schools, hospitals and factories. Employers prefer them for they cost less. With improvements in machinery and labour saving devices, neither strength nor skill is required in industry. Work therefore being light and in the nature of routine, women can attend to it even better than men. Since with industrialisation, much of the work of the world can be done by women, it would appear that the future will have little use for the unfortunate male. Woman will become the bread-winner and man will look after the house, the cooking and the children. As she will hold the purse strings, he will have to submit to her meekly, honour her and obey, and the old matriarchal system will be revived. All this is speculation no doubt. The crafty male may yet make up to the fact that the ground is slipping under his feet, and may entrench himself still more securely in his position of vantage, and keep the woman in her place! But the fact remains that in the New World, the woman by becoming economically independent of man has attained a certain amount of freedom from him to do and live as she likes. The women of the Old World, for instance of Europe, envy the American woman, the "Dollar Princess", as they call her, who, they imagine, has several males dancing around her to her bidding. But such is the perversity of human nature that the American woman in her turn is fascinated by the quiet dignity and old time modesty of the Oriental woman, and is perhaps not so sure that in renouncing marriage, home life and the rearing of children, and in seeking economic freedom from man by competing with him in the market place, she has not lowered her status and forfeited her unique and unrivalled place of respect and affection in the home as wife and mother. Her later years are filled by a sense of loneliness and frustration, and her economic independence has been bought at the cost of denying herself the joy of fulfilling her biological function. The result is a shattering of her physical and psychological make-up and a multitude of com-

plexes and nervous disorders. One wonders whether this tendency of the American woman to ape man and oust him as bread winner is not too unnatural to be anything more than a passing craze of the moment.

DIVORCE

As things are at present, the married couple have a few weeks or months of happy wedded life. The woman works and so does the man. As their hours of duty may differ, they may not meet till night, when they are too tired after the day's toil to be decent to each other. They take their meals apart near where they work, and soon they find they have little in common. The woman is economically independent, and as they avoid getting children, there is nothing to keep them together. They fall out, misunderstandings grow and before they know it they have divorced each other owing, as it is said, to incompatibility of temperament. If home life is the cradle of national and international peace and well-being, it is obvious that this tendency of woman in the New World to unsex herself is not only ruinous to her but must sooner or later land humanity in disaster. Fortunately, however, a woman's natural instincts are too strong for her, and even in America the average woman is old fashioned enough to rear a family and find her happiness in devotion to her husband and children.

CAFETERIAS

Let us follow the New Yorker to where he lunches. This is not in restaurants as it is for example in London, but most often in cafeterias. Cafeterias are typically American in that they stand for speed, self-help, economy and efficiency. Once you get used to them you cannot put up with endless delay in service in restaurants. In the middle of the day the New Yorker has no time to waste over his food. For him time is money. So he goes for his lunch, as do thousands of others, to a cafeteria. The entrance is through one door and the exit through another. A regular stream of people go in, and an equally large number go out. If they had to be served by waiters as in restaurants, probably, only one-hundredth of the people could be catered to, but with self-service there is not only less expenditure on staff and therefore cheaper food but hardly any delay.

What happens is that you follow the crowd to the counter where the food is kept already served in dishes. You line up one behind the other, pick up a tray, paper serviette, fork and knife, spoons, etc. and walk on till you come across what you would like to have to eat. The price of each article of food or drink is mentioned in large figures. You walk on and help yourself to the articles you want, say soup, a vegetable dish, a salad, a pudding and a glass of milk. This food counter with just sufficient space in front of it for a single line of customers to pass is railed off from the rest of the dining hall. Behind the counter are women who replace the food articles as they are removed from the counter. By the time you have picked up the food and reached the end of the counter you pass before a cashier, who sees the articles on your tray, tells you the amount to be paid, and on receiving payment, lets you pass into the hall, where there are hundreds of small tables and chairs. You sit where there is a vacancy, eat your food, and go away leaving your tray and dirty dishes to be carried away in little hand-trolleys, to be washed in the dish-washing room inside. The whole process including the obtaining of food and eating it may not take you more than 15 or 20 minutes. The place is clean and airy, and as busy as a bee-hive.

You, who have been used to the Old World method of being served by a waiter or a servant, feel a little bashful and self-conscious at first at having to carry your own tray and food. But seeing that nobody is bothering about you and everybody carries his own food, you soon get over your false pride, and have learnt your first lesson in the dignity of labour, self-help and practical democracy. For us in India who are so used to getting things done by servants and who incline to regard manual work as demeaning, this training in self-help is valuable. The admirable element in it of not caring the slightest about convention and going ahead with a method if it is practical and efficient is typical of what is best in the civilisation of the New World, and has valuable lessons for us of the Old World who are ridden by tradition and custom.

After getting used to the cafeteria system in America I remember how thoroughly disgusted and impatient I was when I sat later for hours on end, as it seemed, for a cup of tea in a London restaurant. I thought to myself, why on earth do the English not learn the practical ways of America and introduce

the cafeteria in London. I was so enthusiastic a convert to the cafeteria system that I was never tired of singing its praise to the English who listened sympathetically but remarked—The cafeteria may be all very well for the Americans but it will never do over here. To say the least I was not impressed by such conservatism, and I thought all the less of the British for it. This was in 1922. Eight years later when I was back in London, I found a huge building of the American model springing up in the heart of the City, near the Bank of England. On enquiry I was told that it was to house a cafeteria. So the much despised cafeteria had invaded even conservative England and had succeeded in finding a place in the very centre of the City of London. Such indeed is the end of conservatism. It resists change to the last, but, sooner or later, progressive ideas triumph and drive out the forces of tradition and reaction. In this lies the hope for the advancement of the human race.

AUTOMATS

In addition to cafeterias there are in New York what are called automats. These are based on the principle of dropping a penny in the slot and obtaining automatically the desired article. There is hardly any staff to be found in them except a person who gives you small change for your money. In the front wall of the hall are pigeon-holes in each of which is placed an article of food. The pigeon-holes have each a little glass door through which you can see the alluring article, but which opens only when the specified amount is put into the slot underneath it. You collect thus on a tray the various articles of food you would like, sit at a table, eat your food and walk out. You hold a cup where indicated and drop a 5 cent piece in the slot. Out gush steaming coffee and milk from two taps, and you are afraid that they will overflow, and look nervously to see how you can stop them, when to your relief you find that just as the cup is full the flow stops automatically.

These automats are not popular as after all it is too troublesome to be dropping coins for each article of food you want to eat. It is much simpler to go to a cafeteria and take the articles direct from the counter. But the automat is a novel idea, and so people patronise it out of curiosity. The kitchen is directly behind the wall with the pigeon-holes, and when you have removed an article of food from its hole, it is immediately

replaced by another of the same kind, which is then ready for the next customer.

READY-MADE FOODS

The tendency is for people to consume ready-made food articles rather than to bother with cooking. In old fashioned England one starts the day with porridge which requires to be cooked daily. In America, on the other hand, there are various kinds of ready-made breakfast foods such as Shredded Wheat, Krispies, Corn Flakes, and Force which can be had in packets and eaten with milk. Soups, meat-dishes, fish, vegetables, cakes, sweets and fruits are obtainable in tins—all ready to be used without cooking. These are produced on a mass scale and sold so cheap that it is often more expensive to buy the raw materials for them from the market and cook them in the house. Besides, cooking means time and bother and utensils and space for kitchen and washing. All this is avoided by the use of tinned foods. Such stale food cannot have the nutritive value of fresh food. Nor is there the possibility of expressing one's individuality in the dishes one turns out as in the Old World. But these things are of little consideration to those who are out to profit by large-scale centralised production, and the unwary customer falls a ready prey to the greed of the capitalist. He depends on others even for the preparation of his food, and thus tends to become helpless and resourceless. There is no doubt much good cooking still being done by house-wives in America, who like their sisters in the Old World delight in their achievements in the culinary art. But this is a vestige from the past. Who knows that with the inroads which factory manufacture is increasingly making on home-production, this last cottage industry may not also finally vanish?

READY-MADE CLOTHES

As in regard to food, so in respect of clothes, the tendency is for mass manufacture to replace individual effort. If you want a suit of clothes you do not, as in India, buy your cloth and give it to your tailor to make it according to your requirements, and then have the bother of visiting him half a dozen times before he gives it to you. The matter is much simpler. Ready-made suits of every style and description to suit every

pocket and taste are available by the hundreds in the shops of New York. You choose what you fancy, and within a few minutes you are fitted with a suit of your size. Suits are cut by large machines and stitched by the hundreds in factories in various sizes, and are therefore sold cheap. If on the other hand you are fastidious and do not want to fit yourself into ready-made clothes, but wish to have the clothes made to fit you, you have to pay for this luxury through your nose. It means that a skilled workman has to give his time and thought to you, and cut out the cloth according to your measurements and have it stitched separately—all which mean the time and labour of a specialist which in America cannot be had except at much cost. The result is that a suit made thus specially for you costs twice as much as a ready-made one of the same kind and description, and unless you are very well off you content yourself with getting into ready-made clothes as almost everybody does in the United States.

READY-MADE HOUSES

Not only for food and clothing but also for shelter one is dependent on mass-production in this New World. In New York none but a handful of millionaires live in what we in India call bungalows, i.e., separate houses surrounded by a garden of their own. Such individual residences are very, very few in New York City. The bulk of the people live in tenements or apartments, i.e., a set of rooms in a single building of many storeys where hundreds of families live like so many birds in a cage. Most New Yorkers therefore do not know what it is to live in a house of their own.

Even when a house or a building is to be put up, one does not engage workmen to make every part of it before one's eyes according to one's instructions as usually happens in our country, but one places an order with architects who assemble ready-made parts from mass-producers and put up the building in no time. Naturally the ready-made parts are of standard design, and there is little scope for any one with ideas of his own to express them in the house he puts up.

TWO WAYS OF LURING THE CUSTOMER

Thus practically in every sphere—even in those which may be regarded as the most private and intimate, like food, cloth-

ing and shelter—mass-production tends to oust individual enterprise. But how does the individual allow this? Does he not have likes and dislikes of his own, or is he too lazy to bother? Neither alternative is true. On the other hand, the American has still plenty of initiative and energy, and if he yields it is because of economic forces beyond his control. Mass-manufacture is cheap. And under the system in which he lives it would be beyond his means to get things done on an individual basis for himself separately. Besides, in this New World time is money and ready-made standardised goods enable immediate satisfaction of one's wants without loss of time. Further, the weapons used by the capitalist are so effective that the average individual falls a ready prey to them. We may mention two such—firstly, advertisements and secondly, change of fashion.

(1) *Advertisements*.—America has made a thorough study of advertising. Its universities give courses and conduct research in the psychology of advertising and salesmanship. Business houses use every avenue possible to push sales of their goods. The radio, the printed word, placards, posters, sign boards, moving lights, shop-windows, cinema shows, leaflets dropped from the air, and letters traced in the sky with smoke by aeroplanes are all used to lure the people to buy. The psychology of the buyer is studied from every angle, and everything, including the manufacture and design of the article, its packing, the way it is exhibited, price, easy terms of sale, is done with such care to attract, that it is very difficult for the unwary to resist its allurement. People often buy an article not needed by them merely on the ground that it is "cute" or "sweet" or because it is novel and quaint.

(2) *Fashions*.—Again, fashions are created to make people buy, and as desire for the esteem of one's neighbours is an elemental passion with human beings, very few there are who can resist the desire to be in the fashion and to move with the times. Fashions in foot-wear, fashions in frocks, suits, over-coats, pyjamas, shirts, underwear, collars, ties, fashions in head dress, fashions in jewelry, fashions in toilet articles, fashions in food and drinks, fashions in crockery, silver, cutlery, fashions in furniture, fashions in stationery. What is to happen when these fashions change from time to time, and from season to season? The old must be discarded and the new take its place. Thus trade is stimulated and that is all that is necessary.

Even during day fashion decrees that what is worn in the morning cannot be worn in the evening. Fashionable Miss America spends all her time trying to keep up with the times—visiting the hair dresser, doing her nails, plucking her eye brows, painting her cheeks and lips, changing her clothes and footwear as the hour demands, appearing in a frock above her knees during day, and donning on a frock at night which covers her legs and even trails behind her, but leaves the whole of her back exposed to vulgar gaze. One would think that the frock was worn too high during the day and compensated for it by being worn too low at night! If it were the same frock perhaps it would not matter so much, but it is so decreed that the evening frock be of an entirely different texture, quality, colour and design from the morning frock, and to match it an entirely different set of shoes, stockings, gloves, handkerchief, hat, over-coat, scarf and jewelry are required. All this makes for trade, and men and women allow themselves to be exploited and spend their all to conform to the caprices of fashion, however hideous they may appear in the process.

Or take fashions in regard to food. The dining table, the table cloth, serviettes, dishes, cups, glasses, spoons and knives, all must be up-to-date. The old must give place to the new. The spoon may have been oval at one time, but suddenly it is decided that it shall be round, and unless you are prepared to give up the race and face social contempt you scrape up your few cents and invest them on a new spoon of the latest design. So in regard to everything—furniture, carpets, curtains and what not. It is easy for us who stand outside this mad game to see through it and to keep away from it. But once you get caught in the whirlpool there is no way of escape.

NATIONAL WASTE

By production being turned thus to the manufacture of unneeded articles, there is undoubtedly much national waste. If the same spoon can be used for eating your porridge, or drinking your soup, or consuming your pudding, why waste good metal, labour and time in manufacturing separate kinds of spoons for each of the operations? It not only involves waste of national resources, but needless drudgery for the housewife who has to wash, dry, and keep them stored away in good condition. And when it is not only the spoon that is thus need-

lessly multiplied but also plates, cups, saucers, forks, knives, dishes, table-cloths, one can perceive the enormous waste of resources, time and labour entailed in regard to one sphere of life, viz., the paraphernalia connected with food; what to speak of others such as clothes, toilet articles and furniture.

A safety razor blade can be sharpened against the inner surface of a glass tumbler. But to do this does not stimulate production. So special glass blade-sharpers are manufactured. Any small bowl will do for holding water for shaving purposes. But special shaving bowls are manufactured which will be useful for no other purpose.

Any number of panaceas, medicines and tonics are thrown on the market to lure the ignorant. One is made to eat all kinds of attractively advertised but injurious foods, and to set right the malady one is induced to swallow quantities of pills and drugs which claim miraculous powers. White flour from which all bran is first removed is popularised and then when stomach disorders result, bran is sold separately in packets to remedy the defect.

Thus does Big Business play with the wealth and the health of the nation to make profits for itself.

DEPARTMENT STORES

The wants thus artificially created are met by huge Department Stores, which are shops having several floors where every conceivable article from a pin to a motor car is sold. Each such store is practically a market in itself and you may spend a whole day wandering from floor to floor looking at the innumerable wares for sale. For your convenience there are excellent arrangements for washing, toilet and eating, and lounge rooms where you can rest, read and write as you please. You pay of course for what you eat, but the rest of the facilities provided are free. The small shop of the Old World run by a father and son has given place to such mammoth stores owned by huge business magnates, and managed by hundreds of employees professionally trained in the arts of advertising and salesmanship.

CHAIN STORES.

Not only so, a new type of shop has arisen, viz., the Chain Store, of which Woolworth's Five and Ten Cent Store is the

best example. This means that instead of a group of people owning one big shop, they run several shops of the same name, kind and description in various parts of the city, or the country, or even the world. Woolworths is found in every area of New York City and in various parts of other cities of not only America but also of Great Britain. An amazing number of articles of every kind and description costing 5 cents to 10 cents (a cent being roughly half an anna in our money) are sold in them. The articles are produced on a mass scale and distributed to these hundreds of shops for sale, owned by a small group of people. Thus not only does manufacture get into the hands of a few but also sales, and an abundant harvest is reaped by a few share-holders. Where this intense monopoly and centralisation will finally lead, it is difficult to say, but the tendency undoubtedly is for a handful to garner in the bulk of the wealth, and for the masses to live from hand to mouth. The organisation and efficiency displayed in running these stores is certainly admirable, and the multitude of useful and fancy articles which can be had from them for practically nothing is hardly believable.

MASSES ENSLAVED BY HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING

All this not only makes for private profit but keeps the masses enslaved to the industrialist. The wage-earner's life becomes elaborate and looking upon needless luxuries as necessities he works all the harder to maintain this artificial standard of living. He is therefore not inclined to go on strikes or leave his job or fight for his rights. As his wants have been multiplied, he is weighed down by them and becomes a slave to his employer. America exulted over the abolition of Negro slavery about eighty years ago, only to enslave unwittingly the whole nation under large scale business. Why is it for instance that high placed Government officers are the last in India to fight for the freedom of the motherland? Their standard of living is high, and what will happen to their families if their thousand rupees is not forthcoming every month? We must beware therefore of the cry for increased standard of living, when it comes from interested industrialists or highly industrialised exploiter countries and their governments. Far better a life of simplicity and independence, and self-respect and contentment therewith. After all, the much boosted increased standard of

living for the worker is only a trick of the capitalist to find a market for his goods, so that it may make for more and more business and therefore for more and more profit for himself.

HIGH WAGES

Fortunately for America, Big Business has had vision enough to give a high wage to the worker, for if the worker did not have the purchasing power to buy the goods turned out by the factories the system must sooner or later collapse as, unlike Britain, America depends primarily on its own internal trade for its market. The New Yorker then, being well paid, surrounds himself with all kinds of goods. Compared with people of his rank in the Old World, he eats well, dresses well and has fine furniture and accessories. His standard of living may, therefore be said to be decidedly high.

LOW STANDARD OF LIFE

At the same time, there is much in the Old World that those in the New can little afford. Most people desire marriage, but for almost half the population of the United States marriage is beyond reach as they consider it beyond their means. In India the marriage ceremony is an important event in the life of the couple, the family and the community, and as such is elaborate and expensive. But in New York, even when the ceremony is performed in the church it takes but a few minutes, and hardly anybody attends it but the couple and at the most half a dozen friends and relatives. Most people cannot afford a more elaborate wedding. Nor after marriage can the married couple in New York indulge in children as this is too expensive a proposition. They cannot afford a house, much less a garden, but must live in rooms in a flat. They can have no servants, but must do all the cleaning, washing, sweeping, and cooking themselves. They cannot afford to entertain friends and relatives freely as we do in India. They do with the minimum amount of clothing—perhaps not more than two shirts for a man, a light suit for summer and a heavy one for winter wear. In all these respects, their standard of living is definitely lower than us of the Old World.

Further, when you consider life not so much in terms of the physical environment and material gain but in terms of

richness and quality of thought, feeling and action, and personal relationships, the standard of life of an individual in this industrial age as typified in New York City is very low indeed. Let us consider this from the point of view of (a) work or business, (b) consumption, (c) recreation, (d) war and (e) art.

(a) *In Work or Business*

(i) *The Case of the Employee*.—When work was on a small scale, there was scope for initiative and enterprise and for self-confidence. Much depended on the capacity of the individual whether he remained a newspaper boy on the streets of New York or through perseverance and industry became the President of the United States. But today under industrialism the individual has become a plaything of forces beyond his control. He is not his own master as he does not own the tools of production. At one time he rides on the crest of prosperity and obtains wealth he had never dreamt of, and at another he is thrown into a depression when he loses his all for no fault of his. He is no more the maker of his own destiny. A new labour-saving device may mean his being thrown out of work. Formerly natural disasters like famine, drought, frost, flood and earthquake upset the even tenor of his life. But today, worse than these and in addition to them are bank crashes, company failures, trade cycles, and slumps caused by economic policies followed by moneyed interests. These also throw him out of work. He can no more be sure of his future than a leaf floating on the surface of a running stream. Honest, thrifty and industrious though he be, he is fearful of what the morrow may bring forth. He lives thus ever in a state of insecurity, helplessness, and nervous tension, and has little incentive to work hard and get on in life.

Besides, when production was on a cottage basis, wealth was evenly distributed. No one was a millionaire for the wealth went into the pockets of innumerable small-scale producers. But today in America a handful of millionaires—it would be truer to say billionaires—hold the major portion of the wealth of the country. It is asserted that "The members of the Morgan and Rockefeller groups together held 341 directorships in 112 banks, railways, insurance and other corporations, having aggregate resources under their control of \$22,245,000,000. In an after-dinner speech one of the group made the tactical mis-

take of declaring that it had been said that the business of the United States was then controlled by twelve men, of whom he was one, and that the statement was true" (James Truslow Adams—*The Epic of America*, 1940: p. 344).

This tremendous wealth is controlled by a few firms in New York City and yet alongside of them are hundreds and hundreds of poverty-stricken unemployed people dragging themselves along the streets of the city in search of work and bread. And this in America, a land of almost infinite natural resources and small population. Compare this with our own country with its huge population and little or no resources in the way of foreign markets. If industrialisation under capitalism has led to thousands of people in America being thrown out of employment, how can it possibly solve the economic problem in our own thickly populated country? Unemployment in America was so acute lately that New York City—the abode of multi-millionaires—earned for itself the name of "hunger-town".

Under the circumstances can we be surprised if crime and lawlessness increase in the country? America has become notorious for its gangsters and their depredations. To combat organised loot by industrialists, crime has organised itself into a formidable power for evil using the latest technique of scientific knowledge. The industrialist knows no law, nor does the gangster. Law appears to the gangster to be nothing but a means devised by the capitalist for his own protection and for keeping the worker in subjection. So he breaks it when he can do so with impunity.

Or the worker stages strikes to improve his lot. There is internal strife and dissension. And when a house is divided against itself how can it stand? Man turns against his fellow-man, labour against capital. But not with much success as after all the industrialist has all the resources of wealth at his command. America sings of "brotherhood from sea to shining sea." But how hollow it sounds when the American economic order breeds such injustice and unequal distribution.

(ii) *The Case of the Employer.*—Being all-powerful, the business magnate does much as he pleases. His only concern being to make as much wealth as possible for himself, he has no regard for country or humanity.

(1) He wastes the natural resources of the country—forests, oil, coal and other minerals—in his eagerness to accumulate wealth for himself, heedless of what will happen in the future when these limited resources are exhausted.

(2) He resorts to bribery, corruption and deception to gain his ends. A neat cheque to a government officer gets him an oil lease on favourable terms, or a generous contribution to party funds enables so and so to become the President of the United States, who naturally remains under obligation to him and seeks while in office to do him a good turn.

(3) He controls the press, the school, the university, the radio and even the church to instil into the people such ideas as suit him and ruthlessly keeps out all others. As under centralised production, work for the average man is of a kind that does not involve any thinking, the individual under such a system, not having had opportunities of thinking for himself, falls a ready prey to the capitalist-inspired propaganda. And not only the factory hand but also the government officer, the university professor, and the newspaper editor; for they also, as practically the entire nation, are no more than his employees who dare not think except in accordance with his wishes. America "the land of the free and the brave" has thus under industrialism become notorious for regimentation and intellectual slavery.

(4) With expanding business the industrialist looks with greedy eyes on foreign markets, and to protect the sea lanes on which his goods pass, he pleads for a strong navy, and to protect him and his property abroad he requires an army and air-force. The navy, the army, and the air-force exist thus primarily for his benefit, but they are paid for out of public funds. So charitable are governments obliged to be to industrial interests. And as for the business magnate, he not only reaps a rich harvest from foreign trade but also from ship-building, munitions and aeroplanes manufacture incidental to giving him protection. He is thus twice blest. He gets these privileges at public cost and on top of it makes money for himself out of it!

(5) Worse still, the millionaire's power extends beyond the boundaries of his own country. The armament trade and the ship-building interests see to it that nations do not disarm and settle their quarrels peaceably. On the other hand these

interests which fatten on the manufacture of weapons of death and destruction deliberately stir up war scares and appeal to patriotism in various countries—whether belonging to the allied or enemy camp—for huge sums to be spent by their governments on munitions. The armament manufacturers and ship-builders line their pockets with gold thus, but at what cost? The innocent lives of thousands, and wholesale destruction of property all the world over.

(6) Further, the millionaire loans large sums abroad to private bodies and governments; and, threatening to withdraw his help and bring about their collapse if they refuse to do his bidding, he controls them in accordance with what suits his interests. This is America's invisible empire—a new kind of empire controlled by finance as effectively as by the bayonet, and enslaving entire countries and holding them in subjection, and exploiting them without bothering with the details of internal administration. With the present war it would appear that the whole world is in danger of becoming mortgaged to America thus.

What then about the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity for which the Pilgrim Fathers crossed the perilous ocean? They remain a dream, a beautiful dream of a forgotten age to be paid homage to and idolised but not to be put into practice. For the children of the country have installed the Golden Calf in the place of the Jehovah of their fathers. Thus, considered from the point of view of human values, does production under centralised capitalistic methods, based as it is on crass selfishness and greed, enslave and corrupt a whole people, employee and employer alike, and lead to exploitation and strife at home and abroad.

(b) *In Consumption.*—With this we have dealt already. We have seen how under centralised production, consumption becomes standardised. Ready-made articles relating to every sphere—food, clothing and shelter—are manufactured on a mass-scale and sold so cheap that it becomes practically impossible to have anything produced according to an individual's special requirements. This being so, all that the consumer does to satisfy his wants is to walk down to a shop and pick up one of the hundred and one ready-made articles exhibited for sale. Consumption is thus mechanical, devoid of thought and slavishly follows centrally created fashion.

Besides, we have also pointed out how under industrialisation the consumption of innumerable goods, under the pretext of increasing the standard of living of the masses, only enchains the masses all the more to the chariot-wheel of the capitalist. A man whose needs are few such as can be met by himself can afford to raise his head high and refuse to bow to any power which seeks to enslave him. Not so the man with the so-called high standard of living. Every new luxury he adopts becomes an additional fetter preventing him from freedom of thought, movement and action. Of what use is a multiplicity of possessions if in the acquiring of it he becomes a slave? What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

(c) *In Recreation.*—Not only work and consumption but also the recreation of most of the people under such a centralised industrial order is of a kind that does not directly exercise the individual's powers. If anything, it retards their growth and development. It is usual to argue that under centralised production, the worker will have plenty of leisure, so that even if his work is too mechanical to develop his thought he will have the opportunity during his leisure to devote himself to study and art if he so chose. But in this "if" lies the whole difficulty. A man whose head and heart have been starved in his occupation does not as a matter of fact choose to spend his leisure in study and art. For it is work that develops his powers, and when his faculties have been deadened through mechanical work he does not as a matter of fact find pleasure in exercising them. And therefore his leisure is spent, as any one may see in the streets of New York on a Saturday or Sunday evening, in wandering aimlessly up and down the streets, looking at people and shop-windows, or riding in a bus, or watching football matches and other sports, or sitting in cinemas and theatres, or listening to the radio, or reading newspapers which besides filling his idle mind with thrills and sensations spoon-feed him with dished out propaganda from interested quarters, or poring over novels and detective blood-curdlers which satisfy his starved imagination by artificially exciting it. Worse still, when denied of natural exercise of his faculties in work and normal human relationships in the home, he resorts to gambling, night-clubs, dance, drink, drugs, narcotics, crime and immorality. His artificial mode of work and life pro-

duces innumerable nervous disorders. Thus far from increasing and developing his capacities, this highly industrialised life tends to curb and stultify and lower the level of mental life of the average man.

(d) *In War.*—All this in normal times. But no stock of the consequences of capitalistic industrialism is complete, which does not take into account war, for as between highly industrialised countries, the search for raw materials and markets and the machinations of armament trade lead inevitably to armed strife. As war is thus undertaken today chiefly in the interests of large-scale capitalistic industry, when each warring nation pours out its wealth in terms of millions of pounds a day and has in addition its valuable property demolished in large quantities by the enemy, the greater part of the fabulous cost of such periodic wars and of the maintenance of the army, navy and military, naval and air bases during peace must be taken into account in computing, even from the purely economic point of view, the soundness of this capitalistic economy. When this is done, as indeed in any scientific view of the matter it should be, large-scale capitalistic industry, such as prevails in America and the industrialised countries of the world, would appear to be the most expensive form of production the world has ever known, appearing under a mask of cheapness only because a great part of its expenses is paid illegitimately out of public revenue. In this respect, posterity may well look upon those, who pride themselves today on being the foremost industrialised nations of the world, as the most foolish in human history.

Further, considering the effect of war on the life of the people, it is obvious that if even during peace the standard of life of the people in industrialised countries leaves much to be desired, this standard becomes alarmingly reduced in times of war. Thus in regard to food, it is well known that belligerent nations have to tighten their belts and endure much hardship and privation. They do with very little meat, eggs, milk, butter and sugar, and content themselves with the small amounts rationed out to them. They work long hours without holidays and are compelled to do various forms of service whether they like it or not.

What is infinitely worse, the brute in man is let loose violating all moral codes and conventions. Dishonesty, cruelty, selfishness, racial bitterness and mutual suspicion are rampant,

and man slays fellow-man ruthlessly, and destroys whole cities killing overnight innocent men, women and children. The effect of such barbarism is not shortlived. It leaves scars on the minds and hearts of people which do not easily heal. The savage of old was civilised as compared with the fiend into which man has developed under industrialism. With what face can we claim that in the sphere of human relationships and moral development, our standard of life has increased through centralised large-scale production? In this respect, and it is this respect that chiefly matters, it would be truer to say that industrialisation far from increasing man's standard of life has definitely lowered it to a degree unimaginable to the savage of old.

(e) *In Art.*—Or consider art. American tradition, based on the pioneer's life of eager effort to open up a new and vast country and to get on speedily with manufacture and business, is all against art which serves no ostensibly practical purpose. If New York typifies the greatest advance in industrialisation it seems also to reveal the greatest bankruptcy in works of creative art. Art requires the very antithesis of what appears to have gone into the making of this great industrial city. Art is careless of time and economy. Its one purpose is the worship of beauty—in stone, word, colour or sound—cost what it may no ulterior purpose outside itself. It cannot flourish, therefore, in time or money. It asks for no return. It aims at serving no ulterior purpose outside itself. It cannot flourish therefore where everything is weighed in the scales of utility. New York on the other hand is all for speed and efficiency. Its sky-scrappers which are like so many deal-wood boxes embody studied economy in space and money. The principle they proclaim is—the maximum of utility for the minimum of expenditure. No wonder then that compared with the Old World, this new industrial world is strikingly devoid of beautiful statues, avenues and parks. What a host of beautiful figures adorn for instance the bridges of Paris and the public buildings, squares, palaces and churches of Berlin, Vienna, Florence, Venice and Roma, and the temples and ancient palaces and tombs of India? What avenue is there in New York compared with the Champs Elysees in Paris or with the Unter den Linden in Berlin? No, to a stranger from the Old World, this New World is strikingly disappointing in things of art. The contrast between cities

like Paris, Berlin or Vienna and a city like New York is almost like that between the Taj Mahal in Agra and any cement concrete factory building in Bombay.

In this respect again, this new industrial civilisation involves a definite lowering in man's standard of life. Speed, mechanical efficiency, accumulation of wealth, and a multiplicity of goods have certainly been achieved in this New World. But at what cost? They appear to have brought with them standardisation of men's thoughts, a loosening of moral ties, and a lack of aesthetic creation, in short a deadening of much of what makes for the development of human personality.

RELIEVING TRAITS IN AMERICAN CHARACTER

While this seems to be the evil tendency inherent in industrialisation wherever it is found, it must be said in fairness to the average American that he is today youthful enough and energetic enough to resist some of these evils and to rise above them. Nations like individuals come into existence, grow up, achieve results and decay. America is still very young. She was born but yesterday. She cannot be blamed if in her youthfulness she is interested primarily in the outer environment, conquering space and time, inventing big machines, manufacturing a multitude of goods and getting rich quick. Worldly success is what she admires, even if in the process there is a lapse from moral codes and laws. For, for a pioneering people success means opening up the country, and to strive for success is a patriotic duty and wins popular esteem. In spite of industrialisation therefore the people still retain a certain amount of initiative and drive which are required for achieving success. They bother little about custom. A clergyman in New York City will not hesitate to preach in his shirt-sleeve from a pulpit when the weather is hot, whereas an Englishman in the sweltering heat of India will insist on donning an uncomfortably warm dinner jacket before he will attend a formal dinner. To us of the Old World used to such form and ceremony the American is apt to appear at times crude and unsophisticated. But he has a definite advantage over us. Caring little about custom he is able to bring a fresh and open mind to bear upon a problem and to solve it in the most effective manner possible.

He is not ashamed of manual work; on the other hand he is proud of doing things for himself. For pioneers in a new

country work is all-important and idleness the greatest foe. So America idolises work however humble it may be, and despises the idle however rich or noble-blooded they may be. He respects a self-made man, even as he despises a snob who is all-convention and show with no real merit. He is therefore essentially democratic and practical, and cares for little else. He has unlimited self-confidence, optimism and a desire to test all things and hold fast to that which he finds useful.

It is these qualities which in the end stand him in good stead against the paralysing effect of centralised industry. So long as he has them he will not go under. On the other hand, he will march ahead from success to success, for these are the qualities of youth and abounding life. But who can tell how late or how early centralisation will prevent the free circulation of the life-blood of the nation to its various members and cause them to pant for life and die? Heaven forbid such a calamity. But nations who expend their youth, forgetting the laws of nature, cannot hope to save themselves. This is the grim lesson which the rise and fall of nations through the ages abundantly teach. Will industrialism be the canker at the heart which will eat at the vitals of America and bring to a premature and speedy end this youthful civilisation bounding today with new life and promise?

4 TO COLLEGE IN HARTFORD

NEW YORK CITY has kept us long, not so much for its own sake as for the fact that of all places in the world it represents the high water-mark of industrial advance. And as industrialism is the craze of the day, it seemed well to note along what lines it tends to develop, so that we who are anxious to see our country march ahead may adjudge its true worth, and not take to it slavishly just because it happens to be most clamant today. But New York City is not America, and it would be wrong to conclude from our attempt to describe the direction which life in New York City is taking under the influence of industrialism that what we have said of it is true of the whole country in every respect. What follows hereafter must set right that misconception.

TRAIN JOURNEY

To resume our story, we spent the night of our arrival and part of the following day in New York City, and as we were already late for college, we left in the evening for Hartford, Conn., where I was to study Philosophy and Religion for the next three years. We were put in the train by our friend of the Committee of Friendly Relations, and as we passed through miles and miles of slums before we got out of the City we realised the great disproportion in number between these countless abodes of the poor and the half a dozen millionaire houses on Riverside Drive in New York City. The train bore no signs of distinction into First, Second, Inter or Third Class. It was all one class. We were at last in the land of democracy. The only distinction was between smoker and non-smoker compartments, smoking being strictly confined to carriages reserved for the purpose. The train had only sitting accommodation with a corridor running through the middle throughout the length of the train, and the seats being arranged facing each other on either side of the passage. Each person carried his or her own luggage, usually only a suit case. As a rule, only old women engaged porters. The trains ran at a terrific speed—about 50 miles an hour—and stopped at stations just long enough to drop passengers and pick up new ones.

Consequently no food could be bought on platforms. If you wanted light food you could buy lunch baskets containing a meat or vegetable dish, and cake or pudding, and fruit, neatly packed in a small cardboard box, for about 25 cents; or sandwiches, i.e., two slices of bread and butter, or bread and tomato, or bread and meat paste, for about 10 cents packed in transparent oil paper and sealed. Such sandwiches, chocolates, sweets, cigarettes, chewing gum and ice cream could be had from vendors who walked up and down the train while in motion. Filtered drinking water was available through a tap at the end of each carriage and you drank it out of sanitary paper cups which were placed by the side of the tap, and which were thrown away into a receptacle after use, so that no two persons drank out of the same cup. There were water closets, W.C.s. as they were called (or flush commode latrines) and wash-places with hot and cold running water provided for men and women separately. Before a station arrived, a porter in the train announced its name and you got ready if you were getting out there. It was announced again on arrival to remind you, so that there was no chance of your going on travelling absent-mindedly. The engines did not stop in stations for watering. There were water tanks in between the lines on the way and the engines picked up water as they ran along. Coaling was also done so quickly that no time was lost in stations. There was nothing of interest on the platform, as they were used only for getting into or getting off trains and people came there just as the train steamed in. Till a few minutes before a train arrived, passengers waited in the main hall of the station, where plenty of sitting accommodation was provided, and as each train was due to arrive the porter announced it and mentioned the stations it would pass, so that if you were travelling to one of the stations in the list, you picked up your suitcase and rushed off to catch it.

For night travel there were Pulman cars. In these the arrangement during the day was as in the day coach, i.e., two seats facing each other and alongside of them a corridor passing through the length of the train, and another two seats on the other side of the passage. At night, the two seats facing each other were lengthened out to make one bed, and another bed like in second class compartments in Indian trains was lowered above it, so that for the two seats during day there

were corresponding two beds for the night. When it was bed time, the Negro porter made the beds with clean bed sheets, pillow slips and blankets, all provided by the railway. For privacy, there was a heavy curtain which was drawn to screen the bed completely from the passage, so that no one walking on the passage could see one sleeping. Nor was there any disturbance from passengers arriving at night as your berth was reserved. After drawing the curtain, you changed into your sleeping clothes, and went to bed leaving your shoes out to be cleaned by the porter who left them by your bed for wear the next morning. By the side of your pillow was a light which you could use for reading lying in your bed and could switch off when desired. For such Pulman accommodation extra fare had to be paid. Food could be had in the restaurant car attached.

Our journey from New York was not eventful except that everything was interesting to us as it was new. The fare was about three times the third class fare in India. The people seemed more friendly and sociable than the English, who as a rule will not speak to a stranger unless formally introduced. No such formality worried the man by whose side I happened to sit, who chatted all the way showing the greatest interest in us and our country, and when he left gave us his card asking us not to fail to visit him if we happened to pass through his town. This was nothing extraordinary; but strangers as we were, thousands of miles from home, it warmed and cheered us and made us feel at home.

So finally at about 8 p.m. we reached Hartford which is about midway between New York in the South and Boston in the North. There was no need to be peering into the dark to read the name of the station, as the good porter was there to announce the name beforehand. We got out and looked here and there wondering where to go, when two men stepped out to receive us. One was Frank Buchman, now famous as the founder of the Oxford Group Movement and the other the President of the Students' Association of the Seminary we were going to. They welcomed us warmly and fed us in a neighbouring restaurant before taking us to our college. We had not informed them of our coming. Evidently the Committee on Friendly Relations had 'phoned up or wired. It not only looked after us while we were in New York City but saw

that we got to our destination safely. We were impressed by this as it seemed to reveal to us the thorough-going efficiency with which Americans did a job once they undertook it.

ARRIVAL AT COLLEGE

Our College—the Hartford Theological Seminary—was about 5 to 7 minutes' walk from the railway station. We arrived there at about 9 p.m. The main door was locked, as it always is everywhere, in the West, and was opened from the inside in answer to our pressing the electric bell. To us in India who are used to main doors of houses and public buildings being left open till late at night, it seemed strange to find entrances in the West thus shut all day and night. It may be that people in the West are less trustworthy than in our country, and an open door may tempt a passer-by to enter and steal. Or it may be that the country being cold, the people keep their front doors shut to keep off a cold draught. It may be that both these reasons are equally valid. Whatever it is, the fact remains that everywhere you went in Europe or America you were always faced with a closed door, unless the place was a shop or a business firm.

The one who opened the door for us was Andrew—a great big giant of a man, a Dane—who was introduced to us as a janitor. We did not know what this word meant. For all we knew, a janitor might have been an important member of the college staff. He shook hands with us and then helped to carry our things to our rooms. We guessed from this that he was the college porter or what we in India might call a peon. But then we could not understand our being introduced to him and his shaking hands with us. We had never shaken hands with a servant before. But this was democratic America. Servants in the Old World treat you with deference, and in England or India "sir" you after every third or fourth word. Andrew on the other hand was innocent of any such formality. He patted you on the back like any fellow student and called you by your first name bothering neither about your surname nor about tacking a "Mr." to your name. All this struck me as very strange and as carrying things a little too far. Andrew and his colleague, Peter, a Norwegian of like dimensions, had the job of sweeping and keeping clean the college and our living rooms.

ROOMS

We were assigned rooms on the third floor. This was the topmost floor and was occupied by first year men, Juniors as they were called. The general course in the College was for three years. The first year students like ourselves occupied the third floor; the second years, Middlers as they were called, the second floor: and the venerable third years, or Seniors, had the privilege of being on the first floor just above the ground floor, where were the class-rooms and common rooms.

Each of us had two rooms—one, a study-sitting room fitted with table and chair, bookshelf, a rocking chair and a couch, and an electric table lamp which could be shifted to wherever in the room one wanted to use it, or to the adjoining room which was the bed room and in which was a wardrobe where you hung your clothes, a chest of drawers with mirror, a small table, and a spring bed. On the floor of the sitting room a durrie was spread, and by your bed a foot mat. The College provided towels, mattress, pillows, blankets and bed-linen. Though the college was small, the living rooms in it were more spacious, airy and better furnished than the best rooms in Oxford or Cambridge which seemed by contrast poverty-stricken, dark, dingy and cold.

In each floor was a common bath-room, in which there were about half a dozen wash-bowls with running hot and cold water, and above them and along their whole length a long wall-mirror. By the side of each wash-bowl was attached a bottle of liquid soap, from which could be shaken out enough soap to wash one's hands and on the rack was a roll-towel on which one could wipe one's hands. On one side of the room were two W.C.s. and a hot and cold shower bath. After getting used to shower-baths in America one missed them a great deal in British hostels, where the old fashioned bath tubs were in vogue, and which seemed so dirty and inconvenient in comparison. For after all it was not a pleasant feeling after some one had bathed in a tub, to wash it out and sit in it yourself, and as you bathed, to allow all the dirty water to gather round about you. Shower-baths are much more hygienic and clean. The floor and walls of the bath room were of polished tiles which were washed out every day and kept perfectly spick and span.

An electric bell rang on all the three floors of the dormitory—as a hostel is called in America—at 7-30 a.m. to announce breakfast. We were awakened by a Rising Bell about half an hour

earlier, washed and got ready. On the first morning we were escorted by a fellow student to the Dining Hall on the ground floor. The tables were arranged according to classes. We therefore found our seat at the Junior table. We were waited on by two waitresses in uniform, and were shocked again by American democracy when we were introduced to them and had to rise from our seats to shake hands with them.

Directly below the Dining Room, in the basement was the kitchen presided over by a sweet old woman called Anna, the cook. She was a motherly person, over 65 who called us all "boys", and looked after us with care and affection as though we were her children. We visited her occasionally in the kitchen, and when we failed to do so for any length of time she enquired why, sent for us and invariably gave us a nice hot cup of coffee with plenty of cream in it, or a good red apple. Poor old Anna is now dead, but her memory will always abide as something to be cherished by those of us who knew her.

On the ground floor, besides the Dining Room was the Social Room, i.e., students' common hall with a piano and cushioned chairs and lounges, where one sat and talked, sang, played indoor games, or had meetings, parties or other social functions. Adjoining it was the Chapel, equipped with a beautiful organ. Here the whole student body and staff met for prayers every morning before classes commenced. Then there were lecture rooms, office and book store where we could buy what we needed in the way of stationary and books, and a noise-proof Music Room where one could practice on the piano or sing without disturbing any one.

COURSES

AT the office we were given the catalogue of the college containing all the information needed regarding courses, library facilities, and student clubs and activities. We had to meet our class-professor who, in view of our interests and what we proposed to do in life, advised us what subjects we should take up during the first semester. Each year was divided into two semesters or halves, the first being from the end of September to the end of January and the second from the end of January to the end of May. At the end of the three years if you completed your work satisfactorily, you obtained the degree of Bachelor of Divinity (or S.T.B.—Bachelor of Sacred Theology). For this degree course, a Knowledge of Hebrew (the language in which the originals of the Old Testament were written) and of Greek (in which the New Testament was written) was essential. So these were taught all the three years. If you did not wish to trouble with these languages you did not get the degree but only a diploma. There were also post-graduate courses leading to S.T.M. (Master of Sacred Theology) or Ph. D. in Theology. In addition to such theological studies it was possible also to get training in Missionary Work in the Kennedy School of Missions and in Religious Education in the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy. These two were not separate institutions but together with the Theological Seminary were run under one and the same trust, called the Hartford Seminary Foundation, in what was practically one building. This made it easy for theological students to take courses also in Religious Education or in Missions and *vice versa*, if they so chose.

The institution was well endowed, so that lodging and tuition were free for all, and some received scholarships to cover even board. The students were from various parts of America and from Japan, China, the Philippines, Australia, India, Armenia, Turkey, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Germany, Norway, England and Canada, as well as Missionaries from Africa, Egypt and countries of Asia. So we were an international group although we were not much more than about a hundred students.

CONGREGATIONAL TRADITION

The College was Congregational in tradition, and in this it was in harmony with its environment. For Hartford is in Connecticut, a small state sandwiched in between New York and Massachusetts, and belonging to what is called New England, colonised chiefly by people who fled from England owing to religious persecution. The Church of England had retained much of the pomp, show and ceremony of the Roman Catholic Church from which it had broken away. This did not satisfy the more extreme elements in England who wanted very little, or no rites and ceremonies. They therefore went out of the Church of England and founded a new organisation of their own which in the place of ritual laid emphasis on morality pure and simple. Owing to this they were called Puritans. Some of the New Englanders of today are their descendants, morally self-conscious, austere and idealistic, and caring little for ritual and for the monarchical organisation of the Church of Rome or of England. Their church organisation is therefore democratic, its affairs being in principle in the hands of the congregation—hence the name Congregational. As this part of the United States was the first to be colonised by such people and its leaders were influential in formulating the principles of the American Constitution, it may be said that the Congregational Church and churches akin to it embody the typically American spirit—the spirit of democracy and idealism free from show and ceremony.

ESSAY WORK AND EXAMINATIONS

As compared with college work in India we had a great deal of essay writing to do in addition to attending the usual lectures. In listening to lectures one was passive so much so that at times one even went off to sleep. This was not the way to learn anything. If what we heard was to become a part of us, our minds had actively to work on the material before us, and this was best secured by assigning us topics, giving us references to books and getting us to write short essays on them. We grumbled and cursed. It was much easier if the lecturer gave us notes we thought—easier for him as he would not then have the bother of reading so many badly written essays and correcting them, and of course easier for us as we should have been spared the time and effort. But no, whether we liked it or not, we were flooded with assignments as they were called—essays, summaries, writing

of brief notes on given reference readings—and frequent examinations. Sometimes they were so many that they drove us to despair, and we fell into arrears and got into trouble. Lectures were the least taxing part of the work. These assignments were a bug bear and took up much of our time outside the lecture room. Nor could you very well put off doing them, for the lecturer kept a careful record of such work and gave marks which were taken into account on the day of final reckoning. You could not therefore shirk your day-to-day work and hope to make up for it by cramming just before the final examination. I thought it was the limit when one of our very thorough-going professors asked us at the end of the semester to hand over to him even the notes we had taken of his lectures, so that he could see for himself with what care and intelligence we followed him in class, and could mark us for it. Marking was not, as it is with us in India, in percentages, but according to grades A, B and C—A being the top-most and C the lowest. Those who did not secure C were regarded as having failed. At the end of each semester, final examinations were held in the subjects studied during that semester, so that you did not have to bother with them again—unlike what happens in our country where a student is expected to cram up and vomit out at the end of the specified two or three years all that he studied during the entire period—a feat which tends to encourage slavish reproduction from memory and stifles intelligence. Perhaps this explains why our graduates are as a rule devoid of initiative and lack intellectual interest. Their education has left their minds and hearts untouched. It has failed to draw them out, to shock them out of accepted beliefs, and to evoke fresh thought and new endeavour. American education has therefore for us Indians a rather stimulating effect. We do not return the same persons as we went, for it somehow enters into us and transforms us to a greater or less degree. Whether it is the day-to-day essay work where we came to our own conclusions after reading differing news, that is responsible for this, or merely the atmosphere one breathes in America of freedom from tradition that makes one think that one has as much right to one's thoughts as any body else, the Indian student returns from America a little less submissive to authority and a little more confident and self-assertive. Nay more, if he inclines to be adventurous he leaves the beaten track, pursues novel ideas, goes against the current and ends up as a revolutionary.

And do we not need revolutionaries in almost every sphere in India today—religion, social institutions, education, politics, art, morality, economic organisation and what not?

INTELLECTUAL DOUBT

Speaking of my own experience I may say that orthodox and proper as my views on philosophy and religion were, even after the three years' honours course in philosophy at the Madras University, a few months' study in the Hartford Theological Seminary upset all my comfortable beliefs and made me a rebel and an anti-theist. Higher criticism, or the historical and scientific approach to the study of the Scriptures, smashed my old "idols" and imbued me with the spirit of free enquiry, unhampered by traditional belief. At the end of my first year of study I was a sceptic, a disbeliever in all I had been brought up to believe regarding God and Religion. Nay more, doubt entered every fibre of my being and made me question all my beliefs, social and moral, taking nothing for granted. It was an invigorating experience—an experience which left an indelible impression on me for life, and originated in me the desire to test all things. If I got nothing else from my three years in Hartford, this was in itself an invaluable acquisition which it was well worth going to America for.

LIBRARY FACILITIES

For essay work our College provided excellent facilities as almost any college in America does. The library was well-equipped, and the card index of books was so good that with little effort one was able to get at all the important literature bearing on a particular topic. For instance if you wanted to know about the Psychology of Negro children, you would look up the alphabetically arranged card index under Psychology and turn to sub-heading Negro, and under this, Negro children. Here you would find the names of every book, pamphlet and sometimes even magazine article written on the subject available in the Library, with its name, author, date of publication and a short description of its contents. You picked out the type of treatment that met your requirements, jotted down the Library number and handed it over to the Librarian. The book was at your table in the Library in a few minutes. Or if you could not make up your mind as to what would suit you, you walked up to the shelves which were arranged according to subjects and

you would find there many books dealing with the same subject, and after glancing through their contents you took your pick. These two facilities—a very thorough subject-index and free access to shelves—made all the difference to research, and there was nothing one missed so much after leaving America than the lack of these in the libraries of Britain and Europe. The British Museum Library in London, or the Bodleian Library in Oxford, or the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, which boasted of being among the largest in the world, were most inefficient in this respect. Their subject-index was very inadequate, if at all it existed. The books were catalogued under Authors' names, and if you did not know the name of the author it was well nigh impossible to get at the book. And how for instance was one to know the names of all who have written on the Psychology of Negro children? Often it happened that one did not know the name of either book or author. In that case one was practically helpless in these big libraries. After getting invaluable help from the subject-index in American libraries one felt quite annoyed in the libraries of Britain and Europe. Besides, in these libraries the reader had no access to the shelves, so that he had no way of browsing amongst them and finding out good books for himself. If he knew the name of the author he was lucky; if not he just did without the book. What a handicap the research scholar in Europe suffered from as compared with the research scholar in America! Further, in American colleges, the Librarian and his assistants were qualified men—often Ph.Ds.—who knew almost every book in the Library and could give you expert guidance regarding them if required.

A large hall in the Library was reserved for study, and was fitted with polished tables and chairs, and shaded electric lights. Here students could study during college hours and till 9-30 at night, absolutely undisturbed. Perfect silence was observed, and if any one wished to talk with a friend he took him out. The legs of the chairs were padded underneath with rubber so that they made no noise when drawn about.

TYPEWRITING

Most students typewrote their essays—in their rooms of course. It was quite common for students to possess handy portable typewriters, as they were very cheap in American money. Hartford was the home of the Corona Typewriter. In fact, the

Corona factory was almost next door to our College and the portable typewriters cost only about 40 to 50 dollars which could be earned easily by giving 4 or 5 Sunday talks in churches or by some other equally easy means. They could also be bought on a monthly instalment basis, so that you hardly felt the pinch.

REFILL NOTE BOOKS

We in India carry a whole lot of thick note books to college one for each subject. In America on the other hand one carries merely a leather refill notebook allowing a few pages in it for each subject. When these pages are used up, they are removed from the note book and blank pages inserted in their place. One has large envelopes in which the pages of notes on each subject are collected and kept separately. These can later be tied or clipped together to form a volume. This has certain advantages besides the one already mentioned, viz., that it is not necessary to carry many note books from lecture to lecture. As the pages are loose it is possible to introduce matter in between when necessary, as happens for instance when one has been ill and has missed some notes during that period, or when one has come across some further material in one's reading and would like to add it to the notes one has already collected on a topic. Then, of course there is also the economic advantage that by following this system you do not waste paper as you do when you devote a whole note book to a particular subject and have to put a note book away when you have done with the subject, although many pages in it may still remain unused.

COURSES IN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL WORK

Besides the intellectual work in the class-room and the Library, there was an important practical side to the training we were given. America was too practical a country to turn out mere scholars who knew only their text books. The Theological Seminary was meant for training young men for the Christian ministry. So besides Theology, lectures were given on practical subjects such for instance as Pastoral Care, i.e., the problems arising out of one's parish and how to handle them. Students were provided with opportunities of visiting various parishes in the town to study such problems and solutions under the guidance of the pastors in charge. Besides, many of the churches in America conducted various forms of social work such as young

people's societies (for study, discussion and entertainment), mothers' unions (clubs for mothers for a similar purpose), slum work (visiting the poor areas in the city and organising relief and entertainment for them), and visits to hospitals (to talk to patients or to read to them or help them in any other way possible). Students visited centres where such work was carried on, were shown around, and the work described in every detail by people who were conducting them. Not content with this, at the end of the three years' course they were taken to New York City for a few days under the guidance of a member of the staff, and studied on the spot the various forms of social settlement and church work conducted there.

ELOCUTION

Besides this, during the three years, courses were given in elocution, i.e., the art of public speaking. In this, we were taught the importance of clear enunciation, pause, accent, intonation, the right use of gestures to convey various ideas, dramatisation and public reading. The technique of winning the public ear seemed to have been studied in the greatest detail and was made available. But this concerned only the physical side of public speaking.

HOMILETICS

The form in which what one wanted to say was arranged, was not left unstudied either. This was called Homiletics or the art of composing sermons or speeches. You were taught the importance of starting off your speech well, on the maxim "Well begun is half done", and yet your introduction was not to be too long, for it should be in proportion to the body of your talk. In the body two or three points were to be elaborated, and stories and incidents introduced to keep up the interest of the audience. The interest was to be steadily heightened leading to a climax. Nor was the conclusion to be neglected. It was to be carefully prepared, so that the speech tapered off well and left the desired effect on the hearer. Students took turns at preparing sermons and delivered them in class before fellow students and professor, all of whom criticised the sermon, both from the point of view of its form and its delivery. Thus common mistakes and mannerisms were pointed out and suggestions were made for improvement.

It may seem strange that so much emphasis should be placed on form. It would appear that if a person had something really worthwhile to say, people would listen to him whatever the form. This is undoubtedly true in the case of exceptional individuals who have been endowed by nature with oratorical powers or who speak out of the depths of their heart. But not every one is such and the average man, and most of us come under this description, who has to indulge in public speaking may just as well learn to make his speeches less disagreeable by avoiding common errors and observing the rules of the game. America at any rate considered it essential to arm its students in every practical method so that they may be equipped to face life efficiently.

LACK OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

India, on the other hand, where education appears to be a mere matter of passing examinations as passports to obtaining government jobs, has not had to bother with imparting any such training. Practical preparation to grapple with the problems of life has not been one of the aims of Indian education. If there was any practical aim underlying it, it was only to turn out English knowing clerks who, not being trained to think and act for themselves, would carry out the orders of the foreign bureaucracy unquestioningly. So ruthlessly has this aim been put into effect that today from the highest government officer to the lowest it is the clerk mind that comes into evidence in the Indian ranks of the government of India—men whose intelligence and character have been so stifled that like tame clerks they merely carry out the dictates of their British masters. Perhaps it has not been in the interests of the alien government, which introduced this new system of education in India, that Indians should become so practical as to be able to cope with their problems themselves. It was safer to let them memorize texts and to give them degrees for it so that they might repeat like parrots the opinions of British thinkers and deceive themselves into thinking that they were educated, while they were as a matter of fact quite ill-equipped and helpless to tackle the practical problems of life. In what innumerable ways do we not suffer by being under alien rule? If in comparison with Americans, we lack efficiency, organising capacity, and push and go, how much of this is due to the merely memory-taxing nature of the education imparted to us in India? An Indian National Government vitally

concerned with developing the individual's capacities will certainly find much to learn from the practical methods of education pursued in the United States.

PRACTICAL BENT IN AMERICAN ENVIRONMENT

Not only does education in America keep the practical in mind, but the environment in which a child grows up in America encourages him to give up false notions of status and dignity, and to roll up his shirt sleeve and apply his shoulder to the wheel when necessary. The boy or girl helps in many ways in the household, as most people cannot afford to have domestic servants. School children in America are capable of mending clothes, helping in cooking, cleaning the house, washing and gardening, and know to handle tools and do odd bits of carpentry and mechanics in the home sufficient to repair and set things right when they go wrong. They have confidence therefore in manipulating things with their hands and achieving results. This gives them a certain amount of resourcefulness in dealing with practical situations. Besides, even when they are in college or university, many of them—more than sixty per cent—work for a living and thus keep in living touch with the life of the ordinary man and woman. Of this we shall speak later.

TO one from South India like me, used as I was to weather being practically the same throughout the year, it was a joy in the United States watching the seasons come and go with their striking changes. The transition from season to season was quick and sudden and not so prolonged and gradual as it was for instance in England, where the weather was comparatively mild throughout the year. We reached America at the end of September when Fall (autumn) was in full swing. The trees were unlike anything I had known before—so full of colour they were as the leaves began to dry and drop. The Maple tree especially which lined the streets of Hartford on either side were patches of bright shades of pink, red, brown, black and yellow, intermixed here and there with a little green. Maple leaves changed colour in the most ravishing manner at this time, and it was a delight to see them from day to day. The leaves did not all change colour at the same time nor even every leaf in every part, so that every leaf and every bit of it was coloured differently almost from every other. It was altogether a gorgeous riot of colour and I wondered how people living in such a country could not but be poets and artists. There was nothing comparable to this to be seen in England or on the Continent. All this lasted however only for four or five weeks for within this period, the leaves dropped off and the trees stood bare and black with only branches and twigs. A similar phenomenon occurred in April and May, when after the cold winter and with the coming of spring, the trees burst forth suddenly into many coloured leaves and flowers, and again the Maple outdid the others and one felt one lived in a fairy land of colour, and one wished it would always remain spring. But no, it was just as well that spring gave place to summer, and fall to winter, for these seasons also had their attractions.

ICE AND SNOW

Winter in Hartford was most enjoyable, severe though it was. I had never seen snow or natural ice, and so I waited eagerly for the cold to set in. I can never forget the first time I saw natural ice and snow. On my walk in November I came across

a little puddle of water on the side walk and touched it with my foot to see if ice had formed on it, and to my surprise it had a thin sheet of ice on it. Though later I saw much ice, this first experience of it remains vividly with me. As for snow, it was night time and I was returning from the railway station. I saw it against the rays of the street lamps. It reminded me of specks of dust seen in the sun's rays, for instance, when a room is swept, but of course on a magnified scale as the snow flakes were larger than particles of dust. I saw it several times afterwards "in broad day light when it looked like small pieces of paper, or even more like cotton wool, blown about by the wind. I never tired watching snow fall. It was fun following up a flake, as it almost fell in a certain place, but suddenly decided not to do so, and went up again, here and there, up and down, till finally it found its resting place. The snow crystals were of marvellously intricate design, each different from the other, and it was most interesting to examine them as they fell on your window sill. The snow on the roofs and on the ground reminded me always of table salt or cake-icing, so white, even and powdery it seemed. In our country we wear glare-glasses especially during the hot weather. Here people wore them in winter to protect their eyes from the glare caused by the sun shining on the white sheet of snow by which all things outside were covered.

The winters in this part of the United States were severe. The lowest temperature I had ever experienced was in a country place, about 30 or 40 miles out of Hartford, where the thermometer recorded 18° below zero, i.e., 50° below freezing. In some places, it went to even 50 degrees below zero or 82 degrees below freezing. In Hartford itself, the temperature was from four to six months in the year in the twenties, and the first winter I spent there, snow covered the ground for full six months, from the middle or end of November to early May. Unlike winters in England, where the temperature hardly went below 30 degrees, and where there was very little snow, but where it was most of the time cloudy and wet; winters in Hartford were full of bright sunshine; but bright as the sun shone it did not have enough heat to melt the snow and ice. Sometimes however it did succeed in melting it superficially, when the water coming as a drop to the edge of the roof got frozen into ice by the cold breeze blowing on it. Succeeding drops followed and got frozen one after another till they formed a regular stick of ice hanging

from the roof, and when such sticks formed side by side they looked much like a glass bead curtain.

CENTRAL HEATING

Little can we in tropical countries realise the difficulties with which people living in wintry lands are faced. First, there is the problem of heating their houses. In college we had the central heating system, i.e., water was heated over a central furnace and distributed through pipes to every room where it concentrated in what was called a radiator from which heat radiated to the whole room. In addition to this the hot air incidental to this heating was collected and distributed to the rooms by means of pipes. At a particular spot in the wall in the room, there was a square opening through which a constant flow of hot air came into the room from the pipe. If the room was sufficiently heated, this opening could be shut off, and so also the radiator. It was of course possible also to cool the room by opening the windows slightly. This central heating was very efficient compared with the old time method still followed in England of heating by means of open fires inside rooms. By central heating the whole room was evenly heated, whereas by sitting by the fireside one got one's face and front almost burnt while one's back was cold, and a cold draught drawn by the fire blew on one all the time. This was unhygienic. Besides, it would never do in the case of large halls. In Libraries such as that of the British Museum in London, or the Bodleian at Oxford, which are the largest in Britain, central heating as in America had been introduced, but not very successfully. So these places were uncomfortably cold. You could always tell American students from other students by the fact that American students in these Libraries were so cold in spite of the heating that they kept their overcoats on even while at their desk. They were used to much more warmly heated places in their own country.

Our bedroom in college being separate from the sitting room though adjoining it, it was possible to keep our bed room windows open at night, while the sitting room was heated and remained cozy and warm.

Not only houses and buildings were centrally heated but also trains, trams and buses. Their windows were of course shut tight which made them air-conditioned and agreeably warm.

WINTER CLOTHING

The heating in America was so good that one did not need even woollen underwear. Most of us used only cotton underwear in spite of snow and ice out of doors. When one went out, one put on one's overcoat, turned the collar and the lapels of the overcoat up, so that they covered the back of the neck and front up to the mouth, wore earcaps which kept the ears warm against the head, a hat to cover the head, gloves to keep the hands warm, and over-shoes made of rubber into which one slipped one's shoed feet and which kept the feet dry and warm. All these were removed when one entered a house.

CLEARING SNOW

Trains and trams had the problem of keeping their lines free from snow which would cover them up in no time. For this purpose snow ploughs were attached to them which scraped off the snow in front of them as they went along. Buses and cars had chains wound round their tyres to prevent skidding. Horse carts in the village had their wheels removed and in their place sleighs were fitted to them, so that they slid along smoothly on the snow. In the villages, the cart tracks being hidden under the snow, one just drove in sleighs over fallow ground, field or stream, unmindful of what was underneath. It was strange not to have to bother about beaten tracks.

The side walks or pavements on either side of streets where people walked, were a problem in winter, for when covered with snow and ice they became exceedingly slippery. Legislation however decreed that the occupier of a house or building was responsible for clearing the pavement opposite it of snow, so that as a rule the snow from the pavements was systematically cleared. But it was left piled up on either side of the pavement leaving a passage in between. At times the piles became so high that it was like walking through a trench when you walked on the pavement.

The snow that collected on roofs, sometimes to the depth of about two feet, was another problem, for the roofs had this extra weight to bear. During winter one read in the papers of roofs of cinema houses collapsing with the weight of a heavy fall of snow. It was dangerous also to stand below the edge of a roof, for suddenly the whole mass of snow may slide down and injure if not bury you.

PREVENTING FREEZING OF WATER PIPES

Another difficulty—and one which I did not realise till I crossed over to England—was to prevent the water in pipes and the water in flush latrines from freezing in winter time. As already said, winter in England was generally very mild, and so people there did not take elaborate precautions against this. The result was that in the winter of 1928 which was said to have been exceptionally severe in England there were many gas and water main bursts in London. As on freezing water expanded, it burst the pipes and threw up whole streets which thus became unfit for traffic. In America this was avoided by covering the pipes with non-conducting material which prevented freezing. Similarly in regard to flush arrangements I remember visiting that winter a friend in Welwyn Garden City—a newly designed suburb of London—with model houses occupied by fairly well-to-do middle class people. I was shocked to see the state of the flush there, which had not worked for two or three days as the water tank over the house and the pipes had frozen. It was then I realised that the sanitary arrangements which I had taken for granted in America were not very simple but meant an efficient handling of a very real problem.

WINTER SPORTS

There were various forms of sports that people indulged in during winter time. The most elementary was with the toboggan or hand-sledge. You lay face down holding the sledge with both hands and slid on it. It was a great favourite with street children. It was possible also to sit on it and slide down a slope. Sometimes a number of such sledges were tied together one behind the other and a whole row of people would slide down a hillside together. When lakes and tanks were sufficiently frozen, people skated on them. You could hire a pair of skates, each of which was a flat piece of metal which you strapped on to the bottom of your shoe. Underneath it, along the middle of the sole and running from toe to heel was a blade on which you glided over the ice. There was dancing also on the ice accompanied by music. Interesting and exciting to watch was ice-hockey. The game was like ordinary hockey except that all the players were on skates and slid as swift as lightning over the ice with the ball. To look at, skating seemed the simplest thing on earth. And yet when you tried it for the first time you slipped every time

you attempted to stand, leave alone move, on the skates. It provided however much fun and merriment.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

An interesting phenomenon which occurred at times in this part of the country during winter was what is called the Aurora Borealis or the Northern Lights. They were said by some to be rays of the sun reflected by the snows in the North Pole. They appeared here and there in the sky at night, somewhat like sheet lightning, but unlike lightning they appeared when there were no clouds and were more permanent, as they did not vanish in an instant like lightning does. They moved about in the sky and trembled and quivered. When they were in play, telephones, radios and electric lights failed, thus indicating that they were connected wth some kind of electrical disorder. It is likely that they were the results of electrical radiation from the North Pole.

Altogether, though the cold was severe, the days short, the nights long, and the trees and flowering plants were bare, winter had its attractions, which made one look forward to it as much as to any other season of the year.

7 Physical Exercise, Food & Clothes

GYMNASIUM

THE major part of the college year falling in winter, it was not possible to have very much in the way of outdoor sports during term. When all outside was snow and ice, one was by force driven indoors to take what exercise one could. So schools and colleges had gymnasiums, i.e., large closed-in halls where it was possible to take exercise. A popular winter game in America was basket ball which was played in-doors. We used to have matches in college when our team played some other team. There was always great excitement on these occasions. A gallery was provided from which we could watch the game, and there was systematic yelling and singing to cheer the players. Another popular game was wall-tennis which was played as ordinary tennis by two or four. You hit a small rubber ball with the bare hand against the wall, and when it came back your opponent hit it next against the wall, if he failed to do so, you scored a point. Some "gyms", as the gymnasiums were called for short, had even running tracks in them. With some of us, the Y.M.C.A. gym.. which was within ten minutes' walk from college and was larger than ours and provided many more facilities, was popular. There used to be Swedish Drill there to music in the evenings at about 5-30 when 50 or 60 of us drilled under the direction of a physical instructor. We changed for the purpose into shorts and tennis shoes which we kept in lockers in the gym, and after the drill could have a hot shower bath or swim. There were also facilities provided there for boxing, wrestling and appliances for various forms of exercise.

TENNIS

After the snow and ice were gone, it was of course possible to have outdoor sports. We had two tennis courts in our college quadrangle, and so played tennis during May and in October and November. From June to end of September the College was closed for the Summer. It was a job getting the courts into order after winter. They had gone soft and muddy with the snow and ice melting, and got dug up with people walking over them dur-

ing the winter months. So they required mending. It was too expensive to employ people for the purpose, and so those of us who played had to do the work ourselves. We had to cart earth, spread it where necessary, water the courts with a rubber hose, roll and mark them ourselves. I had never done this kind of work before. On the other hand, all these things were done for us in India by servants, including picking of balls. In America however we had to do everything, including picking the balls, ourselves. In this respect America meant a lower standard of living for me when compared with India.

YALE-PRINCETON FOOTBALL MATCH

Larger American colleges and the big universities had of course many more facilities for their students in the way of sports and physical exercise than were available in our college. They had large playing fields, the games usually played on them being base-ball which resembled the English cricket and which was played in spring, and "football" which corresponded to the English Rugby and was played in Autumn.

During my first autumn in Hartford I was taken by a Princeton graduate to witness a "football" match between Princeton and Yale Universities. It took place at New Haven, about 50 miles from Hartford, where Yale University is situated. Hours before the match was to start, cars from all over the country came pouring into New Haven, and soon there was such a traffic crush that cars had to move at snail pace through the streets. The match was at what was called the Yale Bowl, a huge, oval, open-air amphitheatre or stadium with sitting galleries to accommodate thousands of people. Those who had Princeton or Yale sympathies sat with the colours or flags of the respective universities. The students of these universities had a special part of the Bowl reserved for them, and made themselves very conspicuous by their yells and songs. Yells were peculiar to America. Each college or university had a particular yell which might or might not have had any ostensible meaning, but which was shouted out together in an organised manner by those who belonged to the college or university, to indicate their affiliation and loyalty. At this match there were professional yell-leaders who stood with megaphones opposite their student gangs, shouted instructions, and the whole student body as one man stood up and shouted their yell together with the greatest enthusiasm and

earnestness, the yell-leaders directing the yell by moving their hands up and down with vigour, and sometimes even jumping up bodily to the skies in their enthusiasm. The match was exciting enough but one wondered whether these yells, songs and demonstrations on the part of the spectators were not even more exciting. When the match was over, the captain of the victorious team was carried in procession and the whole student body of the university which he represented performed the snake dance, i.e., went in procession winding in and out like a snake through the playing field, with band and music. It was fine to watch it from the galleries. After the match the day was spent in dinners and dance, and the whole town wore a gala appearance. It was strange that a mere game should produce so much commotion and interest. It seemed like an event which concerned the whole nation and not merely the two universities involved.

FOOD

Our students were not well to do. Many of them were sons of farmers and had worked their way through college. Our food therefore in college was simple and inexpensive, but nutritious. At 7-30 a.m. for breakfast we had grape fruit (a fruit somewhat like the Indian *mosambi* but bigger and sour and said to be good for digestion), a cereal (i.e., a ready-made product of wheat, corn or other grain) with milk, and coffee or postum (a hot drink like coffee, but made out of wheat and therefore not having the bad effects of coffee). Or if there was no fruit, we had pan cakes (soft flat wheat cakes like the South Indian sweet *dosai*) and maple syrup instead. At 12-30 a.m. we had dinner, which consisted of a meat and vegetable dish and a fruit pie, and for supper in the evening at 6-30 we had similar food plus a hot cup of chocolate (cocoa made with milk instead of water), except once or twice in the week when we had soup or beans in the place of the meat dish. On Sundays we had a specially good and heavy midday meal. As Sunday afternoons were regarded as off time for servants we got only cold suppers on Sunday nights—cold meat, salad, pie or fruit preserve, and a glass of cold milk. (Milk in America was always pasteurised in dairies, i.e., sterilised by being raised to a certain temperature. So it was not boiled before use as in India). These were left on the table and we went and ate when we wanted to. Our food cost us about 8 dollars or 25 rupees a week. If we ate outside, it would have cost more.

The students of each year—i.e., the Juniors, Middlers and Seniors—sat separately, each lot at its class table. There was usually much merry-making and pleasant humour at the time of eating. Songs were sung about each other and about members of the staff, and jokes made which brought quick repartees. On special occasions members of the staff and lady students were invited, when of course there was a regular feast of food, song, speeches, and fun. But this verges on social life in college about which we shall speak presently.

CLOTHES

Most of us had only three suits—one that was used on special occasions and on Sundays, one for ordinary everyday wear in winter, and the other, lighter for summer wear. These being woollen did not require to be washed, but were brushed from day to day while in use, and pressed off and on to keep the crease. They were dry-cleaned by the launderers only once in a few months. Dry-cleaning was expensive—about a dollar a suit. We washed our shirts, underwear, socks and soft collars ourselves on Sundays in the basement, i.e., rooms under the ground floor of the building, where special arrangements such as sinks (water troughs) with hot and cold running water and wash boards were provided. The troughs were about two feet above the ground so that you stood and washed by rubbing the soaked clothes against the wash board held in the trough, and did not get your feet and clothes wet. Our bed linen and towels were provided by the college which sent them to the launderers, and so we did not have to bother with them.

I had never washed my clothes in India. In this respect again my standard of living had decidedly gone down in this land of industrialisation. To have your clothes washed in laundries was expensive, and therefore you washed them yourself and ironed them with an electric iron in your room. It was just as well so, for when you could do these things for yourself you could always have your clothes clean and well pressed. Perhaps this explains why American students looked smart and well dressed as compared with British students. Their suits were well pressed, while English students in Oxford or London went about with baggy, grey flannel trousers which never seemed to have known what a crease was. After all there was nothing like being self-reliant and being able to do things for oneself. It is this essential

of gain for oneself. So it was that it had enjoined that the Brahmin who was to occupy himself with spiritual pursuits should be divested from responsibility for looking after his own needs which were to be the concern of others in the village. For when self came in. Truth became distorted if it did not completely vanish. But America did not go so deep nor suffer from any such scruples. It thought that a religious man had as much right to live as anybody else and, on the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire, paid its preacher a fee as it paid its doctor or lawyer.

A few of our students waited at table in the college dining room and earned their board thus, and one—a student from Albania—set up a barber's saloon in the college itself, which both students and staff patronised. Some took up church work during the summer in remote parts of the United States and Canada, cut off during winter by snow and ice. Besides providing them with some money this gave them practical experience of the kind of work for which they were being trained. A few worked on farms in the villages during the summer and came back looking fresh and strengthened by the open-air life and good food available there. All such work brought students into live contact with persons and things which gave them a knowledge of the world outside the four walls of the college and enabled them to return to their books with greater interest and understanding. In what follows I shall speak only of my own experience of student jobs.

TALKS ON INDIA

During the college year, I used to be invited out off and on on Sundays to speak in Churches. This gave me an opportunity to see a little of the country side, and enabled me to spend a pleasant week-end outside Hartford and meet people remote from towns. An experience which was perhaps a little unusual was, to be asked by a lady in Hartford who had invited some of her friends to tea, to go over and entertain them by telling them about India. It was not a lecture but was of the nature of drawing room talk when the ladies asked questions and I answered them. They asked me to say something in "Indian", thinking that that was the language spoken by all Indians! This was a mistake very commonly made not only in America but also in England and the Continent. I had also to sing one or two Indian

tunes to them which seemed to please and interest them. I spent about an hour thus, and at the end of it returned home with a ten dollar note in my pocket!

RESTAURANT WORK

The summer vacation was long, from the end of May to the end of September, and unlike our students in India, who waste their time during holidays on novels and idle talk, most students in America were very busy working and putting by money for their next year's education. We were three students left in college during our first summar vacation—all the three of us from India. Two of us worked in the College Library for a few hours every day, dusting the books and cleaning the shelves, for which if I remember right we were paid at the rate of 20 or 25 cents an hour. What we earned thus was easily sufficient for our board during summer, and our rooms in college were free. But we were not content with this. We were in America and wanted to partake of the experience of American students and earn what we could for the next year. And so we went round from place to place on the streets of Hartford asking if there was any work we could do, till finally we struck on an enterprising Jew who had recently opened a restaurant in the busy cinema section of Hartford, and thought he would make use of us and thus advertise his restaurant. He fitted us up in palm-beach suits (cream coloured, which looked like China silk), black ties and light blue turbans (Punjab style with tail), and placed us at the entrance of the restaurant to serve ice-creams and cool drinks. It was the ice cream parlour of the restaurant, and was decorated with palms in brass pots to give it an Oriental setting. It attracted the attention of passers-by who often collected in front of the restaurant and gaped at us. He paid us only 15 dollars a month, but we made about 50 to 75 dollars a month through tips. Our work was from 7-30 or 8 p.m. to 11-30 p.m., and our customers were chiefly people from theatres and cinemas.

The work was light, as it consisted merely in taking ice-creams or drinks from the counter and placing them on the table where those who ordered them sat. What was more, it was very interesting as a study of human nature. For our customers were all kinds of men and women—some nervous and shy, others self-composed and assertive, some loud and noisy, others calm and quiet, some showy and demonstrative, others unassuming and re-

tiring, some full of push and go, others meek and submissive. From the time of their setting foot in the restaurant to the time of their leaving they were of interest to us—their walk, their choice of where they would sit, their manner of speaking to each other and to us, their interest or lack of it in the menu-card, their clothes, their interest in other guests at other tables, their choice of what they would have and why, their capacity to wait till the order was executed and how they occupied themselves till then, the way they partook of the food when it came, their conversation, their jokes, their gestures, their laugh, their frown, their temper, their reaction to the bill when presented, their competing with each other to pay it, their rising from their seats and helping each other to their coats and hats, and last but not least the tip they left for the waiter. Generally our experience was that women were more self-composed and aggressive than men. Women were also less generous. They usually gave smaller tips than men, and at times they were so mean as to reduce or remove altogether the tip their men companions left. Young women were keenly interested in their fortune. At any rate, at this restaurant I had to read the palm of a young woman who, in spite of my telling her that I knew nothing about palmistry, insisted that I must tell her fortune as I was from India. I drew all I could from my imagination and told her when she would marry, how long she would live, how many children she would have or not have, and such like. She said that most of what I told her tallied with what other fortune tellers had said! She was so pleased with it that she slipped a dollar note into my hand when she left. How easy, I thought it was to earn by lying! People, however sane normally, seem so anxious to peer into the future that they are willing to pay any one anything for the illusory pleasure of being told what is to come. Older folks whom we served at this restaurant took special interest in us as students from India, talked to us in a friendly way, and to encourage us left us a good tip when they went.

AT SILVER BAY

The next summer found me in Silver Bay which is a beautiful spot on Lake George at the northern end of New York State. The Lake was fairly long and it took a steam launch about two hours to go from Albany on its southern end to the northernmost point, touching at various places on the way where were a few

houses and hotels where people went for a holiday. The Lake had little islands in it and was surrounded by hills which made it all the more attractive. There was a motor road which skirted round the Lake along the shore.

Silver Bay was a delightful spot towards the northern end of the Lake. During winter there was a private school there for the sons of the rich. During summer the buildings were used for conferences. There were conferences of college men, college women, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. secretaries, missionaries and others, each lasting for about a fortnight, and thus extending through the entire summer. The college men's and women's conferences were attended by about six hundred and fifty or seven hundred students each. I was not a delegate to any of these conferences but went there as an employee on contract to work through the entire summer. The Silver Bay Association, which looked after the board and lodging of the delegates, employed about a hundred and fifty young men and women—mostly students—for the work connected therewith. I was one such. My job was along with another young man to make coffee and tea and supply them in cups, with milk and cream in little pitchers. The job was not so simple as it looks, as there were so many delegates to feed, all eager to finish their food as quickly as possible and get on to their meetings. The delegates were divided into two batches who followed each other in the dining room, within an interval of 45 minutes. That is, if the first batch had breakfast at 7 a.m., the second had it at 7-45 a.m. During these 45 minutes, the food had to be served and eaten, the tables cleared, dishes washed, and the tables set again for the second batch. And when it is considered that there were at least three or four courses for each meal, and each course involved separate plates, dishes, knives, forks and spoons, and there were over 300 persons in each batch, one can imagine the enormous amount of washing that had to be done during this short time. It was done thus.

(a) *Large-scale Dish-washing*.—The waitresses removed the dishes after each course, in hand-trolleys to the dish-washing room and left them by the side of a girl who tended the dish-washing machine which worked by electricity. Her task was to stand the dishes one by one vertically against wooden pegs in a belt. This belt passed into a chamber of the machine where the dishes were washed first with hot water and soap by means of brushes which worked on them as they passed through it, and then

into plain hot water. They then moved into the next chamber where they were dried by hot air, and came out finally at the other end of the machine, sterilised, sparkling clean and dry, and ready for immediate use. They were removed by another girl at that end of the belt and arranged on trolleys which were then pushed by the waitresses into the dining room for use for the next batch. Forks, spoons and knives, as well as glasses were washed on smaller machines operated by electricity. The dish-washing section which one would think would normally require the greatest number of hands, needed the least, as the work was done speedily and efficiently by one or two machines. They did the work of forty or fifty individuals. And one thought if this was the way to be introduced in our country, what would happen to our millions of men and women who must give up their employment in favour of the machine? Instead of increasing their wealth, it would add to their poverty, misery and starvation, by throwing more and more of them out of employment. Conditions in England or America, where industrialisation had brought prosperity, were different from conditions prevailing in our own country. For there they had a small population, while we in India were one-fifth the human race. How was our huge population to be profitably employed if at every turn we substituted large-scale machinery for human labour?

Further, judging from my own experience, large-scale methods of production made one helpless, as one had learnt to work only with expensive equipment. And as such equipment was beyond the means of the worker he became dependent on the machine-owner who employed him, often on unfair terms. By this I do not imply that the Silver Bay Association was in any way unfair to us. It was not a profit-making concern, and that made all the difference between it and the ordinary big firms. But while I had learnt at Silver Bay to make gallons and gallons of good coffee and tea by turning on the switch, I still cannot say that I can make a decent cup of coffee or tea for myself in my own home! I had learnt to produce it on a large scale with the aid of machinery, but had no experience of making it on a small scale without such equipment. The individual under large scale production tends thus to become resourceless and dependent on factors beyond his control.

(b) *Waste of food*.—What often worried me at Silver Bay was the enormous amount of good food that was thrown away.

In my own department no one seemed to care if a whole ten gallon drum of thick cream had turned sour, and had to be emptied into the drain. Sometimes while being brought on a wheel barrow from the cold storage room, a big tin of milk would get upset and thus be emptied of its contents. But no one cried over this spilt milk or sought thereafter to bring the milk in more carefully. We had excellent food—chicken, salads, cakes, pies, ice-cream, ices and fruits, and plenty of milk and cream. When I saw this over-abundance and thoughtless waste which went with it, I remembered the poor in my own country who did not know what milk was, nor even what it was to have more than the meanest gruel and salt, and that only once a day. It was an unjust world. But it is no use shedding tears over it. What is necessary is that we bestir ourselves to break our chains, overthrow the forces of exploitation, and strive to establish a new economic order on just and stable foundations. No nation has become prosperous through the good offices of any other. It has to save itself. We have only ourselves to blame if we do nothing to lift ourselves out of our grinding poverty and degradation.

(c) *Friendship between sexes.*—Work and food, good as they were, were not however the chief attractions of Silver Bay. Those who had been there, always wanted to get back there primarily because of the companionship and friendship that Silver Bay provided. We were young men and women from various parts of the United States and of the world, thrown together for three months, working together, eating together and playing together. It made it possible for us to make many valuable contacts which have remained with us for life.

The relation between boys and girls was quite free and natural and so far as I know nothing untoward happened. The girls knew to look after themselves and usually went about with boys in twos or threes. I suppose, on the theory that there was safety in numbers. We went in groups of 5 or 6 on walks and picnics, swimming, rowing and hill-climbing. We had an Association of ourselves—the employees or “emps” as we called ourselves for short—and there were many songs we sang of “the jolly, merry emps of Silver Bay.” Those who were religiously inclined met also for prayer. We had our own meetings when we were addressed by some of the distinguished speakers that came to speak at the conferences. We had also sing-songs, excursions and fancy dress parties. I remember on one occasion

pairing off with a girl in a fancy dress function. I was supposed to be a prince and she my wife! The nearest I could get to the dress of an Indian prince was to borrow two brilliantly coloured silk Kimonas (dressing gowns) from some girls, put one on with the opening i.e., the front, coming on my back and the other over it but this time with the opening coming in front. This gave the appearance of my wearing a closed gown inside and on top of it an upper gown opened out in front, revealing the closed gown inside. They were of two different colours and my turban was green with a red tail. So I was colourful! For the unfortunate girl however, I could not get much more than a white bed-sheet, which I wound round her to the best of my ability to look like a sari going over the head. As always happens on such occasions, some people showed great originality in their get-up. It was innocent merriment and provided much amusement to us who took part and to those who watched.

We were between 17 and 25 years of age, all unmarried working and playing together like children of one family. We quarrelled at times and abused each other, but also made up. Amongst the girls we had our favourites. With them we were to be seen much together. Some we liked because they liked us, some because they had brains, some for their character and others for their looks. So we had quite an assortment of girl friends. But very often we went about by ourselves, not bothering about them, even as they went without us. The young men and women gathered there were from good, middle class homes, and so knew where to draw the line in their relations with each other. Perhaps the reason why Indian students in England had a bad reputation in their relationship with girls is that they had little or no opportunity in England of mixing with girls from good homes. They therefore associated with a class of girl with whom they had nothing in common. Their only attraction for these girls being one of sex, naturally it led to disaster. America provided better facilities for us in this respect.

Many of us in India, brought up as we are entirely apart from girls, are apt to imagine that it is impossible for grown up girls and boys to come together without endangering their morals. But my life at Silver Bay convinces me that boys and girls can be trusted with each other, and can grow up together in a natural way without complexes and obsessions, and what is more can strengthen each other's character and develop each

other's intelligence by mutual friendship, if only they received good moral and religious training in their homes. It is this that is important and when they have had it as children, most of them can be trusted to keep their character in tact even as they can be trusted not to steal. There is of course the danger that even so with some, intimacy with those of the opposite sex may end in trouble. But the remedy for that does not appear to be to segregate them one from the other, for that only represses them all the more and leads them when an opportunity occurs to burst through such artificial barriers. The cure seems rather to lie in parents by their own life and example, and by moral and religious instruction, placing in the hands of their children, a rudder whereby they can be depended on, of their own accord to weather through the storms of temptation.

Silver Bay gave me several friends—both boys and girls—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Americo-Japanese, Ceylonese, French, Swiss, and American. The Americo-Japanese was a University girl from Tokio—one of her parents was American and the other Japanese. She was full of life, wit and intelligence, and we often discussed races, their characteristics, and the problem of inter-marriage. On the whole she was against inter-racial marriage as from her own experience the children of such mixed marriages suffered as they were incapable of identifying themselves with the race of either parent. Her life she said was one of perpetual conflict—the Japanese in her pulling one way and the American another. If only couples considered the difficulties their prospective children would have, she thought such inter-racial marriages would be fewer. She was full of the problem of race, arising out of her own experience, and had shrewd observations to make regarding the racial characteristics of different nations. She believed of course that the Japanese, Chinese and Indians had a great deal in common as against the nations of the West. Inspite of her very American exterior she was at times remarkably oriental and seemed to like being thought oriental rather than American. Another of my girl friends was an American of French parentage. She was an artist from head to toe, and had won the Grand Prix of Rome for portrait painting. She lived in a world of colour, and I interested her because of my brown colour in which she said there was a curious blend of many colours! She tried painting me as I sat under a tree writing a letter, and after two hours of effort she

tore up the portrait as it failed in her opinion to do justice to my colour.

Amongst my boy friends was a French-Swiss from Geneva who was writing a thesis in New York on Methodology. His English was not very good and he had few friends among the Americans, whom he thought very superficial. Lake George, however, he loved as it reminded him of Lake Geneva but he longed for the Swiss mountains. He thought that we of the Old World had a certain depth of thought and feeling which Americans lacked. He thought little of American girls, and compared them always unfavourably with his sweet-heart back in Switzerland, declaring that by contrast American girls had no "soul", pronounced in the feelingful French fashion, and meaning that they did not have the depth, dignity and seriousness of women of the Old World. We became such good friends that 8 or 9 years later when I was in Europe I made it a point of visiting him in a remote village in the south of France, miles away from a railway station. Unfortunately I could not meet his wife and children, as they had gone away during the summer to Switzerland. If I had, I should have known what a woman with a "soul" was like!

(d) *Work on Tennis Court.*—Having made good friends that summer I decided to return to Silver Bay next summer, and to work on the Tennis Court. This job was much in demand, as it meant only a few hours' work in the mornings and afternoons, and that too in the open air. We were two, and had to look after six courts. With a hose we sprinkled water on the courts, rolled them and then marked them. Marking was easy as we had a little contrivance on wheels, which, as we pushed it along on the lines, marked evenly with white *chunam*. When the courts were engaged, as they were most of the day, we were free. Besides, whenever it rained, and we were happy when it did, we had a holiday, as the courts could not be used. We worked early mornings and when the delegates were at their meetings. Between one conference and another there was an interval of a day or two when we were commandeered for other work incidental to getting the place cleaned out and ready for the next batch of delegates. When women guests arrived at Silver Bay, we as well as about a dozen other young men had to take charge of their luggage and convey it to their rooms on lorries. For this sometimes we were tipped by the guests and

thus made a little income over and above the 30 dollars we were paid every month. The manual work of various kinds which we did at Silver Bay helped us to realise for ourselves the attitude of the paid labourer to his job and to his employers, and his love of rest and leisure!

(e) *Meetings.*—A privilege which we enjoyed as employees was to attend the meetings of the conferences during our leisure. This we could often at night, although as a rule we preferred to roam about. We could however hear some of the well known speakers of America if we chose. One that had made an impression on me through his books in my student days in India was Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. He dealt in his books with students' doubts regarding religion. I had an opportunity of hearing him at Silver Bay and I can never forget the half hour or one hour he gave me discussing some of my doubts, sitting on the grass under the shade of a tree.

(f) *International Night.*—An incident which had a far-reaching effect on my future was connected with the International Torch Light ceremony at Silver Bay. On this occasion foreign students were invited to take part, one student representing a country. He dressed in his national costume, held his national flag, and stood in a row on the platform with others representing other countries. The lights were put out. A person representing Humanity entered with a torch with which she lit one by one the candles held by each national representative. As the candle of each representative was lit he or she announced his or her country, held up his flag and sang its national anthem. I was asked to represent India. I realised that if I were to do it, I would have to stand in my western clothes as I had no Indian clothes with me, hold the Union Jack and sing "God Save the King". I had not developed any national consciousness while in India. But this touched me to the quick. I was not going to proclaim India a slave amongst the nations with no individuality of her own. In spite of much persuasion I refused to take part. So India went unrepresented. But the fire that lit the candles of the other nations burnt itself into my heart that night, and still remains, and cannot be put out till India gains her rightful place amongst the nations. It has brought me suffering and imprisonment no doubt, but it has also given me light and abounding joy.

I went to Silver Bay to earn money. It gave me in addition friends, a wider knowledge of the world and human nature, an appreciation of the point of view of the manual labourer, and a passionate love of my own country. Who could say it was not worthwhile? If it were not for the American system of self-help, I should not have gone to Silver Bay and I should certainly have missed a great deal. Like Saul of old, I went looking for an ass and came back with a kingdom.

9 SOCIAL LIFE IN COLLEGE

OURS was a small institution, and therefore it was possible for us to get to know each other and to have a good time together. I have already described the mirth and frolic we had in the dining room. Some of us met in each other's rooms occasionally for ice-cream parties. Ice-cream could always be bought from the nearest druggists. On Sundays students who had cars came around and took some of us out for a drive into the country. Some of those who lived in town as well as our professors asked two or three of us at a time to their homes for a meal. Often about 50 or 60 of us were invited to after-dinner parties in the houses of our staff, when we had coffee and cakes and played games. These occasions were always very enjoyable and gave us a chance of mixing with each other and with the professor and his family.

Great ingenuity was displayed in the games made up or chosen for the occasion. It will not be possible to describe them all here. One which I thought particularly good was to find out titles of books from particulars given on labels on the wall or from articles spread on a table. Thus Locke "On the Human Understanding" was depicted by a lock fixed over the picture of a man standing underneath it! "Sweet Seventeen" was represented by 17 loaves of cube sugar on a tray. Then there were games composed over Shakespeare's plays. Thus a series of questions was asked the answers to which were to be names of such plays. For instance, Q. Who were the lovers? A. Romeo and Juliet; Q. When was the marriage? A. On the Twelfth Night; Q. Where? A. At the Hamlet; Q. Who gave the reception? A. King Lear and his three daughters; Q. Who were the brides maids? A. The Merry Wives of Windsor; Q. Who were the bestmen? A. The two Gentlemen of Verona; Q. From whom did they buy the wedding ring? A. From the Merchant of Venice; Q. What was their honeymoon like? A. A Midsummer Night's Dream; Q. What started the quarrel? A. Much ado about Nothing, and so on giving the whole story and showing how later, for the husband married life became a Taming of Shrew, for the wife giving Measure for Measure, and for both

a Comedy of Errors till finally they came to terms and the people proclaimed All's well that ends well. The questions and answers may not have been quite as I have stated them, but they were on similar lines.

INTRODUCTIONS

Of course these functions were mixed, that is, were attended by both men and women students. At times we invited the women to our building, gave them a dinner and then played games or sang or chatted in the Social Room, at other times we were invited to the Women's building. I remember the first time we went to the Women's Hall, being introduced to each other in a novel way. Usually we were given a piece of paper on which we wrote our name, or the country or town from where we came, and pinned it on ourselves, so that it made it possible for us to know each other's names without being introduced, and could start conversing without further formality. But this time we were asked to stand in a semi-circle, men and women all mixed up. The first one in the row gave his name and the name of his home town, the second said "I am pleased to meet you", so and so, repeating the name given and then followed by giving similar information about himself. The third mentioned the names of the first two and then his own, and so on till the last had to say "I am pleased to meet you", so and so, so and so, and so and so, giving the names of all in the company in order, and then ended up by giving his own. In this way, the names of all were drilled into us by the time the last man introduced himself.

ENTERTAINMENT

On these occasions we had simple forms of entertainment. Once for instance it was announced that we were to have a scene from Romeo and Juliet, and what happened was that a girl took the part of Romeo and a boy of Juliet. Juliet stood on a raised platform supposed to be the balcony of an upper room, and Romeo below it. The whole scene consisted in Romeo saying "Juliet, I am going away", and Juliet feelingfully asking "Romeo, are you going away?" This went on repeatedly till the lovers were hissed and hooted out of the stage! Such amusement may seem childish but it provided a great deal of mirth and after all in an entertainment what more does one want? Far better this than the formal and tiresome drawing room talk about weather or polities, which sophisticated people considered

proper and indulged in on such occasions. Young America did not bother much about such conventions. It amused itself in the way it pleased, leaving slavish conformity to rigid conventions to youth of the Old World, grown old before its time.

Hallow-e'en which came towards the end of October was celebrated in a striking way one year. It is the evening devoted to ghosts. A few days earlier, posters bearing the images of a skull and cross-bones, and of black cats, hissing and purring with their tails up, were stuck on the walls. Cats were supposed to behave like this when ghosts were about. We were invited to the Women's Dormitory that night, where we were taken round Ghost land. The lights were put out and we were directed by girls dressed in long white sheets as ghosts. We came across a "sick ghost" in the darkness, absolutely chalk white in its face, and then "lost souls" wandering restlessly between heaven and earth. The most thrilling was the trip through Hell, where terrible shrieks and groans were heard; and as you walked in pitch darkness suddenly you trod on soft things which yielded to your feet and made you almost stumble and fall. In one place gusts of wind blew you almost off your feet, and in another some cold, wet, sticky, clammy stuff hit you here and there on the face and neck, giving you a cold shudder. It was altogether a weird experience. Hallowe'en nights are usually spent in narrating exciting ghost stories.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas also provided opportunities for merry-making. Father Christmas—who was one of the party dressed as an old man, with a long white beard, in a red gown edged with fur—arrived from Toy Land which was supposed to be in the snows far in the north, and made everybody happy by his amusing ways and by the presents he distributed. The presents he took from the Christmas Tree, which was a branch of the ever-green fir tree fixed in a corner of the room, and which was beautifully decorated with them and with many coloured lit candles. With humorous remarks he handed them over to those whose names they bore. Christmas carols were also sung.

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

Saint Valentine's Day came about the middle of February. It was the day for lovers. Unlike other days of the year, on

that day a woman could propose to a man, and a man had the right to kiss any woman who stood under the mistletoe. On that day more than on other days lovers wrote letters and poems to each other and proclaimed their love. The mistletoe is a white-berried plant which remains green during winter. It was tied on this day to door-posts, and if a girl stood under it by accident or on purpose she could be kissed by whoever wished to kiss her. Sometimes men carried a twig of mistletoe with them and kissed any girl they wanted to, merely by holding the twig over her head! Not that many took advantage of this convention, but it made it possible to tease the girls and get some fun out of it.

"HOT-DOG" PARTIES

We went at times for "hotdog" parties, that is picnics to some beauty spot, where we lit a fire and roasted "hotdogs" or meat sausages at the end of sticks, stuck them between rolls of bread and ate them off our hands without further formality. When roasted and eaten in this manner they tasted much better than when served in the dining room with all the usual paraphernalia. We sang camp-songs round the fire, gulped down cups of coffee and came home after spending a good evening.

HOUSE PARTIES

Occasionally we had also house parties, when twenty or thirty of us went off to an inn or country hotel for the week-end with a member of the staff. We wandered all round, had a good time and returned to college refreshed.

COLLEGE LOYALTY

As the result of such close social contact in class rooms, meetings, games, picnics and house parties, one or two couples fell in love with each other during the college year and got engaged or married. Others got to know each other better. It widened our knowledge of human nature and strengthened our character, and gave us a better preparation for life than what a mere knowledge of books could have done. It also developed in us an attachment for each other and for our College—a sort of family feeling which we called the Hartford spirit—a feeling of friendliness and kinship which we have for each other and for any one who has been to our College. This is fostered and maintained to

this day by Alumni Bulletins issued from Hartford once in three months, giving news about old Hartfordites scattered all over the world—their movements, activities, marriages, births and deaths—, and Seminary Bulletins giving information about what is happening in our old Alma Mater. When one gets them one reads them from cover to cover and longs for the good old times of study, play and friendship, now gone beyond recall.

HISTORICAL

AS our College was situated in the North, I did not see very much of the Negro. The Negro problem exists in its acutest form in the south of the United States. The reason for this is historical. The North was industrial and could get on with the white labour available there; in the South however there were large plantations of cotton and tobacco which required an army of field labourers. As these could not be had locally, hundreds of negroes were captured on the west coast of Africa by the British, the Spanish and the Portuguese and sold in the southern States as slaves. This went on for well over two centuries, and brought big profits to the slave-traders. The southerners got so accustomed to employing such slaves that they resented any interference with what they thought was their long established right to employ slave labour. The northern States not requiring slaves could afford to take a disinterested view of the matter, and decided that slavery was an evil and must be abolished. Besides, the northern white workman was afraid that if Negro slavery extended to the North his position would become uncertain, as slave labour was thought to be economically cheaper than free white labour. So both employers and workmen in the North wanted slavery abolished. For this as well as for other reasons, the North went to war with the South, and finally the South had to yield, and in 1863—just a little over 80 years ago—Negro slavery was abolished from the United States.

THE NEGRO PROBLEM

The children of those slaves however remain and have given rise to one of the most serious problems in the national life of the United States. You come across it in almost every sphere of life. The health and living standards of America, the economic structure of society, political life, education, administration of law, morality, religion, music, dance have all been affected by the presence of this divergent stock. The direction and the degree of development of American life has been to a great extent determined in the past by the presence of the Negroes, and their significance for the future promises to be

no less important. They constitute one-tenth of the population of the United States, and considering that two-thirds of them are to be found in the South, the proportion of Negroes to whites in the southern states is naturally higher. In some states e.g., Mississippi and South Carolina, more than half the population is Negro.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

At the same time it is in the South that the Negroes have the tradition of having been slaves. They had been till of late cooly labourers with no rights whatsoever and had been entirely at the mercy of their owners to be kicked about and maltreated like animals by their managers. Though their owners were sometimes kind to the slaves and took a fatherly interest in them, still the whites could not but have at the bottom of their hearts a feeling of supreme contempt for the Negro as the erstwhile slave, or conversely a feeling of lofty superiority regarding themselves. So long as the Negro kept to his place as an under-dog, the white did not mind being kind to him. But no sooner he was emancipated and obtained a political status equal to that of the white, than the white reacted by strict social boycott and ostracism. He could not tolerate the idea of the black man, till now his slave, rubbing shoulders with him as an equal. Besides, he was afraid of the Negro competing with him in the economic sphere. Consequently as a counter-blast to abolition of slavery by the United States' Government, the southern whites reacted by complete social boycott of the Negro, and a secret organisation called the Ku Klux Klan was formed by them and went about in white masks and white robes to terrify the Negroes and to prevent any intermingling of the blacks with the whites. Any Negro found even walking with a white woman was hounded out by this secret Klan and punished by whipping to death, by hanging, or by burning at the stake. As I did not go south of New York City I did not have the opportunity of seeing this notorious Klan in action, nor even to observe in person the extent to which social ostracism of the blacks was carried by the southern whites. But one has heard of course of Negroes being obliged to live in separate residential areas, to have separate schools, separate hotels, separate places of amusement, and even separate churches, to travel in trains in separate compartments called Jim Crow Cars, and in separate parts of trams. Such hu-

miliation of the Negro cannot but recoil on the whites themselves sooner or later. The wounds, the strong inflict on the self-respect of the weak are not easily healed but wait for the day of revenge. For, as it always happens, when one community is discriminated against by another, the discriminated community by way of defence-reaction develops a strong group consciousness. The Negro community in America has thus tended to draw into itself and to become a self-conscious and self-dependent unit taking pride in itself, building up theories to establish its own capacity and importance, and ready to defend itself and assert itself against the dominant whites. Already there have been frequent race riots, and the black and the white in America are moving further and further apart and becoming mutually hostile. White America will have herself to thank if through her haughty discrimination against the Negro today, she is faced with growing internal dissension and strife in the future. In this discrimination therefore lies the danger to the unity and solidarity of the United States.

THE UNTOUCHABLE IN INDIA.

Such treatment of the coloured by the white is not however peculiar to America. It exists in a similar form wherever the white man came in contact with the coloured man and where the coloured man was politically or otherwise weaker than he. Thus centuries ago the Aryan invader of India through the severest form of social ostracism ever practised in the history of the world brought about the community now called the Harijans—untouchable, and in some parts of the country, even unapproachable and unseeable by the higher castes. Literally the very shadow of the Harijan suffices to pollute the “holy” Brahmin. Can human conceit go further? America has a long way to go before it can come anywhere near the tyranny we have practised in regard to the Harijans. So we at any rate cannot point our finger of scorn at the Americans. So long as the “untouchables” remain with us, we must bow our heads in shame and confess that among the nations we have descended to a depth of inhumanity not known in any other part of the world. To the American whites at least the Negroes are an entirely different race—poles apart in colour and features. But the Harijans are now bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, with practically nothing to distinguish them from us in colour or appearance.

With what face, therefore, can we justify such wholesale social segregation of them? The law of Karma decrees that what a man sows that shall he also reap. We segregated the Harijans our own countrymen, and treated them as dirt. Shall we now complain if other nations treat us as untouchables, brahmins of the purest blood though we may be? With what measure we measured, it is now being measured out to us. And the remedy is not so much to blame others for not applying standards which we ourselves do not apply to our own fellow countrymen, but to do our utmost to abolish inequality in our own social life.

THE INDIAN IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

As already said, the phenomenon of the white tyrannizing over the coloured is not peculiar to America. Britain treats us in much the same way as America treats its Negroes. In South Africa for instance Indians have separate schools and even separate churches. They are not allowed in the same compartments in trains as the whites. They have to live in specified areas in cities. They are not attended to in the shops or restaurants of the whites and so on. Even in Britain itself it is well known that only third-rate lodging houses will give shelter to Indians, and that Indians cannot obtain admission to many dance halls. Why go so far as Britain? Even in our own country the whites have the impertinence to refuse us admission into compartments in which they are. Their clubs will not have Indians as members. Many hotels and boarding houses run by them on the hills refuse to take Indians by saying "Sorry, no accommodation", even when the places are half empty. Such treatment will continue so long as we are weak and disunited and remain politically their slaves. If we do not make any effort to alter the situation, we shall have to reconcile ourselves to being spat upon by the whites.

NEGRO OCCUPATIONS

Hartford being in the North was fairly free of Negroes. We had no Negroes in our college, but there was a sprinkling of them in town. They were usually railway porters, or peons in offices and hotels, waiters, domestic servants, or labourers on the streets. I have not seen them in Hartford even working as clerks. Evidently they were discriminated against and given manual work or work that required muscle. Naturally, they

could not be employed in positions that entitled authority over white workers, for that would antagonise the latter and create trouble. Nor could they be employed in work that implied association with the whites on equal footing, nor in any capacity except as menials where they had to deal with white customers. Thus they were not even employed as tram car conductors, bus drivers, or as salesmen. They are being absorbed more and more now in manufacturing and mechanical industries. But most labour unions refuse them membership.

NEGRO INTELLIGENTSIA

That they are capable also of brain work is seen from the fact that in Harlem which is the Negro section of New York City they have their own churches, banks, clubs, hospitals, schools, hotels, restaurants, cinemas and shops. There are Negro pastors, doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers, architects, musicians and businessmen, but all of them are restricted in their clientele to their own community. One has heard also of Hampton the famous Negro college in the south, and of the Tuskegee Institute run and managed by the Negroes themselves, where the students are given training in agriculture and industries to make them economically self-dependent. Booker T. Washington, known the world over as the foremost Negro Educationist, is in charge of this institution. In 1923, it had a teaching staff of 238, and a student body, both men and women, of 1636, women being given training in industries suited to them. Several smaller Negro schools and colleges are also coming into existence and the Negro is gradually being trained to take his place in every walk of life in his community.

RACE DISCRIMINATION IN CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

As things are at present the Negro is discriminated against and looked down upon even in the northern States and in Christian institutions. I do not know if Negroes were actually forbidden to enter a white church. But I did not find Negroes in white churches, nor in Y.M.C.A.s. A Ceylonese girl told me with tears in her eyes that when she sought shelter with the Y.W.C.A. in Albany, N.Y., on her way to Silver Bay, she was refused accommodation. As she wore an overcoat, her sari could not be seen and she was taken for a Negro woman. And having once refused her they would not take her in, in spite of

her saying she was from Ceylon, was a stranger to the town and had no place where she could spend the night. This was rather exceptional, for Y.M.C.A.s and Y.W.C.A.s generally had no objection to taking Indians. Nevertheless it shows the extent to which colour prejudice had eaten into the heart of America that even professedly Christian institutions should fall a victim to it. Christ said that he came especially to rescue the weak and the lost, and yet his avowed followers did not hesitate to bang the door against them. It were better he said that a mill-stone were hung round the neck of him who offended one of the least of these little ones, and that he were drowned in the sea. Strong words these, coming as they did from a prophet of love and non-violence, but it shows the depth of Christ's indignation against those who were inhuman to the weak and the helpless, and as compared with the privileged and armed whites the coloured peoples of the world are indeed in this position. What would Christ say then to the churches, Y.M.C.As. and Y.W.C.As., and sectarian schools and colleges in America which refuse admission to the Negro, and to similar institutions in South Africa which turn away the Indian? And what about the Christian colleges in India, where the white professors have retiring rooms and reading rooms to themselves, with a sprinkling of Indians to act as a smoke screen, and where the Indian lecturers are consigned to retiring and reading rooms of their own? Colour prejudice is bad enough ordinarily, but it is wholly unpardonable in those who loudly claim to follow Him who came to seek and to save those that were lost.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIANS IN AMERICA

It is sometimes thought that Indians cannot be mistaken for Negroes, as Indians are not so dark. But not many American Negroes are jet black. A few of course are. Most of them have a percentage of white blood in them which makes them brown or even a very pale brown. What is a distinguishing feature of the Negro, however, is his hair which is kinky. That is, each hair twists itself up into a little coil and sticks close to the head. Even when a Negro is of mixed breed and has more than fifty per cent white blood, his hair remains partially kinky. I have seen such with almost ninety per cent white blood, white skin, brown or almost golden hair and bluish eyes, but the hair still tending to be kinky. As the head is covered with a hat out

of doors, the hair is hidden and there is sometimes little to tell a Negro from an Indian, although of course in many cases the features betray, as Negroes have heavy jaws and thick lips. But who bothers about such detail? The American sees a dark face and it is natural for him to think that it is that of the Negro he always sees day in and day out on the streets.

Besides, unlike the Anglo-Indian or the mixed breed in India who classes himself with the Englishman and thus commands a certain status in our country, the mulatto or the mixture of Negro and white is treated in America as a Negro even if he has only a small fraction of Negro blood. In Silver Bay for instance there was a young mulatto, in whom there was perhaps not more than a drop of Negro blood, as he was as white skinned as any white American, had blue eyes and light hair, and yet he did not eat with us in the common dining room. On enquiry I discovered that he was not pure white as I had thought but was a mulatto. He ate with the Negroes who like him were professional cooks. His hair betrayed the Negro blood in him, as though it was almost golden, it still inclined to be kinky.

As thus even comparatively light skinned mulattoes were treated as Negroes, hotels and restaurants in the United States refused admission even to Indians. They had no prejudice against Indians as such, but were afraid that their customers might mistake Indians for Negroes or mulattoes and might stop patronising them. Rather than take this risk, they kept Indians out even knowing them to be Indians. Once two or three Indian friends from Yale University visited us at Hartford, and we—two Indians—thought we would take them to a Chinese restaurant for a meal. The two restaurants we went to were decent looking ones, run entirely by Chinese and were far from crowded. But both of them politely refused to feed us, saying that all their tables had been booked. One or two of our party had turbans on—some Indians in America wore turbans in order to proclaim that they were not Negroes!—and we ourselves explained to the manager who was Chinese that we were from India, and yet he said that he was very sorry that he had no accommodation. We did not think that a Chinese restaurant would treat us so, but if it did, it was of course because of fear of losing their white customers. Most of the time I was in America, I ate either at college or at Silver Bay, or at friends' houses where I was known to be an Indian. So this was the first and

last experience I had of being turned out of a restaurant for not being white. Sometimes restaurants would feed you but in a back room, away from the others. But Indians resented this and usually walked out of the restaurant in a temper. There was no such colour prejudice in America against the Chinese, thus showing that if there was any prejudice against us it was only because we could be mistaken for Negroes or mulattoes.

It is surprising how you are influenced by your environment. In America most Indians did not want to be mistaken for Negroes. This was perhaps natural as they did not want to be insulted and treated with disrespect. And this led to their not wanting to associate with Negroes or to be found in Negro company. So Indians also often fell into the vicious habit of boycotting the Negro. The air in America was surcharged with it and it was difficult to escape it. But it must be said to the credit of a few Indians I knew that they went out of their way to befriend Negroes. After all, our sympathy cannot but be with those who suffer at the hands of the whites.

LYNCHING AND LACK OF RESPECT FOR LAW

Before we leave the subject of maltreatment of Negroes by the whites, we may say a few words about lynching. Lynching is the wreaking of mob vengeance on an alleged erring individual. Today it takes place only against Negroes and in the South. But it was not always so. Whites were also lynched till about twenty years ago and lynching occurred in various parts of the country. An outraged community took the law into its own hands in the case of murder, rape and such like, and avoiding the delay and uncertainty of judgment by trial in a court of law, vindicated itself immediately against the accused individual. That this should happen even today in a country which regards itself as civilised seems indeed surprising!

It is to be accounted for in two ways. Firstly, ever since the slave insurrection and massacre of the whites which took place in the South at the time of the anti-slavery agitation, i.e., about the middle of the last century, the southern whites have lived in constant dread of being massacred by the Negro. Consequently they have wanted to terrify the Negro, and they do so by lynching him when an opportunity occurs. Lynching is now prohibited in several States, and that yet it occurs and goes unpunished is due to the fact that the sentiment of the com-

munity favours lynching under certain conditions. Secondly, America has not had the same tradition in regard to law as we of the Old World. Under pioneer conditions, in the absence of adequate legal machinery, the early white settlers were used to administering punishment themselves without reference to law courts. Even till the end of the last century, under the disturbed conditions resulting from the Civil War, the mob took up the responsibility of punishing offenders. Further, the American settlers of the early days had not troubled to conform to the legislation passed on them repeatedly by England and they frequently violated the laws as a mark of revolt against English domination. Consequently American tradition, if not actually opposed to law, had very little respect for it. An unpopular law, say for instance, of Prohibition of manufacture and sale of intoxicants, was commonly violated with impunity, and the degree of its enforcement varied with public sentiment and local political expediency. The people tended to consider themselves as above law and did not conform to it when it suited them, evidently on the plea that, after all, law was made for man, not man for law! This is of course consistent with American individualism, and explained much that appeared illegal and anti-social to us but passed almost without disapproval in the United States. Given such an attitude to law and an unholly fear and hatred of the Negro, one can readily understand the occurrence of lynching of Negroes in the southern States of America.

NEGRO CULTURE

The Negroes had no culture of their own. Their mode of dress, living and behaviour, and their language were what they had learned from the white American. Whatever culture they may have had in their home country was long forgotten, and the present generation knew only the United States, Africa being as foreign to them as to the white American. And yet in some respects they distinguished themselves. Their language, though English, had become a dialect peculiar to them. In regard to clothes, they were fond of bright colours, and to make up for the dark coloured suits usually worn by men, they went in for loud ties, and handkerchiefs and socks to match. Similarly the women favoured bright coloured hats, ribbons, scarves and stockings.

(a) *Religion*.—Their religion was of course Christianity but of a very simple type bordering on magic. They believed naively in a heaven where they would be compensated for all their present sufferings, and a hell-fire where all evil-doers and those who did not believe in Christ would be thrown to burn for ever. They bore a child-like faith in a Father-God to whom in simple trust they poured out their petitions for food and clothing and for victory over evil.

(b) *Music*.—Their songs were moving and full of pathos. They were a highly emotional race, and add to this the terrible sufferings they underwent as slaves and you can account for the heart's anguish which their songs and music embodied—songs which spoke of agonised separation from one's loved ones, of backs broken under loads too hard to bear, and of the dread of the slave-driver's whip, and songs expressing a longing for heaven far from suffering and care where they would enjoy all the good things denied to them in life. They were so musical that when they sang, a whole group of them swayed like one man with their eyes closed, pouring their soul into the song.

(c) *Dance*.—Being emotional, the Negro has distinguished himself chiefly in music and dance. Today, it is in these that his contribution to America, and through America, to the world lies. Much of the jazz music that we hear in cinemas and dance halls are of Negro origin. The West seems overwhelmed with it, and fashionable whites who would ordinarily spurn having anything to do with the Negro, spend whole nights dancing to Negro tunes. The dances are no more than rhythmic movements of the body, often voluptuous, ugly and sensual, and yet the fashionable white is prepared to learn them of the Negro for in this perhaps he finds an expression of his own soul also.

THE FUTURE

It is too early to say in what further respects the American Negro will make his contribution to the world. He is a member of a minority community in a country where the majority community is all-powerful and deeply prejudiced against him. He has to work against bitter racial discrimination. He is only a generation or two removed from slavery and has had little education. He is still very much an underdog, and underdogs cannot easily rise to the height which is within them. It is only as they shake off their yoke and attain poise, confidence and self-respect that their genius can come to full light.

11

RELIGION

THE religion of a people is one of the most difficult things to describe, as it is most personal to them and they are therefore unwilling to parade it. And yet no account of a people can be complete without it, for rightly or wrongly even today religion is at the root of the culture of a nation.

The last world war shook the foundations of morality and religion in the West. The result was that the youth of America had little use for the old type religion of their fathers. Most college youths are rebels anyhow. Besides, Americans were by nature individualists, that is they were not willing to accept beliefs handed over to them by others. They liked to believe only what appealed to their own intelligence. So one would think that America was the last place in the world where religion could survive. This was generally true and yet in a very real sense religion held sway even in this most modern of countries.

RELIGIONS IN AMERICA

Some of those who were too radical to continue in the faith of their fathers adopted any striking new religion that came along—Christian Science, Mormonism, Theosophy, Bahaiism, Mohammedanism and Hinduism. America provided a fertile field for new faiths, as Americans like youth were fond of anything novel and strange. But as ever against these faiths and Judaism which was the religion of the Jewish Americans, the main religion of the United States was of course Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant. Protestant Christianity, however, with its emphasis on the individual, its revolt from tradition and ceremonies, and its democratic church organisation was more typical of America and had more truly contributed to what was distinctive in American culture than Catholic Christianity, so that in what follows I shall confine myself to Protestant Christianity. Besides, it is only of it that I have personal knowledge.

PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

The essence of Protestant belief is that God is Father, all men are therefore brothers, that He is holy and that therefore

men should renounce evil, and that in order to reveal this to its fullest He became human in the form of Jesus Christ, and spent his life in loving service of those in need, and himself knew no sin. In essence therefore this religion demands of its followers service of fellowmen and freedom from sin, and in relation to God an attitude of love as of a child to its father, and prayer for strength to serve others, and to abstain from evil.

In order to get an idea of how this religion finds expression in everyday life in average middle class homes in the United States, let us follow it up in the life of a child and incidentally see also how it affects the adult.

EARLY RELIGIOUS TRAINING

A few weeks after the child is born it is taken to the church and baptised, that is, it is given a name, and the parents and two or three others called its god-parents promise on that occasion to look after its spiritual welfare. When the child is 3 or 4 years of age it is told of God as some one who loves it even more than its parents do, and when it is put to bed the parents relate short and simple moral and religious stories, and frame two or three simple sentences of prayer expressing the needs of the child, who repeats it after the parent.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

When the child is a year or two older it goes to the Sunday School, that is, graded classes conducted in the church by trained teachers and a band of helpers, to teach boys and girls from 5 to 20 years of age, the Bible and the essentials of the Christian faith. In addition to this, they learn simple songs about God and what He expects of children. They are also taught the virtue of giving money by collections taken from them on Sundays when they meet. The class is for 30 to 45 minutes. The teachers are guided by story books, songs and readings composed specially for children, and the child goes from class to class according to its age. Thus children from 4 to 6 years of age may form one class, and age-groups of 7 to 9, 10 to 12, 13 to 15 and 16 to 20 years may form separate classes each group having a separate teacher and text books suited to the age group. By the time the child has gone through all the classes, it has a fairly full knowledge of all the books of the Bible, the essential doctrines of Christianity and the Church, and most of the fa-

mous religious songs or hymns. In order to encourage children to attend the classes regularly, they are given little picture cards with small texts from the Bible on them, and at the end of the year, prizes are distributed for the best attendance, for good conduct, and for those who have learnt their lessons best through the year. The Sunday school also gives entertainments consisting of instrumental music, songs, recitations and sometimes short religious plays in which the children take great interest. Off and on visitors address the whole Sunday school. I have thus spoken to a few Sunday schools regarding India. The children were keenly interested in other lands as they had heard occasionally about them from missionaries and had learnt about them in their schools. They have missionary Sundays, when people speak to them about mission work in foreign countries and raise funds from the children. If the children are well-to-do they give and collect money, toys, sweets and clothes to be distributed amongst the poor children during Christmas time. Thus the children get a fairly thorough training in the Bible, Christian Doctrine, Religious music and prayer, and are encouraged to take interest in philanthropic and mission work. Sometimes there are children's services in the church, when instead of the usual service for adults conducted by the pastor, the children conduct the whole service. These are usually most enjoyable.

A child's life from 4 or 5 years of age onwards is of course, the most important, and once it has been taught the essentials of morality and religion at such an early age it abides by it through life, and even though as an adult it may think it is throwing its religion overboard, it comes back to it after a while in a modified form.

SCHOOLS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

So much importance is attached by Americans to such religious training of the young that there are colleges which devote themselves entirely to training teachers in Religious Education. One such was attached, as I have already said, to our college and was known as the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy. Courses were given in it leading from the Bachelor's Degree to the Doctorate in Religious Education, and those who passed out from it were employed as teachers and directors of Sunday Schools. It was of course vital that a matter of such great im-

portance as Religion should not be left to chance, and to the vagaries of untrained and ill-equipped teachers but should be handled in an efficient and scientific manner by people well trained for their task. And considering that Scriptural Readings and Text Books were changed year after year, one can imagine the amount of work that was required to be done merely in the matter of publishing suitable literature for Sunday schools.

RELIGION IN THE HOME

Besides such systematic training in the Sunday school, the child of course received religious instruction in the home. I have spoken of the stories and prayers at bed time in the case of very little ones. The older children were taught to spend a few minutes in the morning in the quiet of their rooms in reading portions of the Bible and in prayer. The prayer was not necessarily of any fixed pattern but left to the boy or girl to frame as he or she willed. There were also family prayers where the parents and the children met for common worship. A passage from the Bible or from a devotional book, of which several now exist was read, and expounded to the children by the father or the mother, and one of the parents prayed often *ex tempore* voicing their needs and aspirations. There was also grace said before meals, that is, at table before partaking of the food two or three sentences of prayer were said either silently or on behalf of all by one of the parents or by one of the children, expressing thankfulness for the blessings of this life and aspiration for spiritual food and service. The prayers were not recited according to a set formula from memory, still less were they in a dead language like Latin, but were the expression in simple everyday language of the ideas and feelings of the individual praying. I make special point of this, for I am convinced that however useful set prayers may be there can be no real live religion unless a person learnt in prayer to commune spontaneously with his Maker in his own individual way.

IN THE SCHOOL

The state schools and colleges did not give religious instruction, for the children who attended them belonged to different denominations and faiths. But there were a number of private schools and colleges run by religious sects and they always had

at least chapel service before they started work. Further, there were student Associations of those who were religiously inclined headed by a member of the staff or a senior student. These as well as school or college Y.M.C.A.s or Y.W.C.A.s arranged for religious meetings, study groups, and student camps and conferences. I have already referred to such a student conference during the summer at Silver Bay where students from all over the country came together for ten days or a fortnight both for social life and for religious meetings and discussions led by some of the foremost religious leaders in the country. These were inspirational and also dealt with students' doubts and difficulties regarding religion.

Y.M.C.A. AND Y.W.C.A

The Y.M.C.A.s and Y.W.C.A.s in towns sought also to do what they could to develop the bodies, minds, and souls of the youth. These institutions were usually criticised for being more in the nature of social clubs than religious organisations. But they felt that purely religious bodies had no attraction for the young, and that by catering to their physical, social and intellectual wants they were able to draw the young to themselves and help them also in their religious development. The Y.M.C.A.s and Y.W.C.A.s were popular and served a vital need.

IN THE CHURCH

Further when the boy or the girl grew up he or she attended the church service with the parents. It consisted of prayer, song, scripture reading and sermon. Some churches had song services once a month, which were popular with those who loved music. Or associated with the church was the Young People's Society or club for the young people of the church. It was run under the direction of the pastor. It organised games, dinners, entertainments, study groups and religious lectures for young people. It worked much on the lines of the Y.M.C.A. or the Y.W.C.A. but in a smaller way and without separating the sexes. It gave opportunities to young people of either sex for moving freely with each other in study and play. Some of these young people collected money amongst themselves and sent one or two of their members as delegates off and on to big religious camps and conferences.

In these various ways the child was trained in religion ever since it was 4 or 5 years of age till it became an adult.

MISSIONARY TRAINING

For religious work in foreign lands, training was given in Schools of Missions which admitted men and women who were selected by the Board of Foreign Missions for work abroad. Besides being instructed in the Bible and Christian doctrine, they were given courses in the language, religion, customs and life of the people among whom they were to be sent, and were taught in these matters by former missionaries who had retired from mission work. Missionaries who were back on furlough often spent a few months in these institutions attending courses which might be useful to them on return to their mission field. These schools confined themselves to purely religious training. If the Missionary was going to do educational, medical or industrial work, he or she had technical training first, and then attended the school of Missions for the religious side of the work.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING

I have spoken till now chiefly of religious training rather than of the religion of the people, if such a distinction can be made. The reason for this is that America has evolved quite a distinctive organisation and technique for this purpose. Besides, as I have already said, such training is important, and religion, which underlies a nation's culture, should not be left to wither and die for lack of nurturing. Nothing that is worthwhile in life comes without striving and undergoing the discipline of training—e.g., knowledge, art, morality. How then should we imagine that in regard to religion alone, no training is required? Without training religion often becomes superstition, magic, or a mechanical adherence to ritual. To understand the scriptures and the religious rites and practices that have come down to us through the centuries, training is essential. Once we have gained some understanding of these, we may go our own way in regard to how our own religious life will express itself. But to ignore study and training in Religion, it seems to me, is to disregard the religious experience of the great seers of the past and to think that we can start afresh on our own without their help. All that is aimed at in religious training is to cultivate in the child an attitude of reverent worship, allegiance to moral values, and an intelligent acquaintance with the religious heritage of his race.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN RELIGION

It may be worthwhile to mention what strikes one as the chief characteristics of American religion, meaning by that not a mere cult of worship with its peculiar doctrines, ceremonies and church organisation, but religion understood in a wider and deeper sense in which the word would signify a clinging to certain ultimate values which are regarded as supremely worthwhile. In this sense religion would refer also to the faith of those who are not church goers and do not subscribe to the usual sectarian doctrines, but who nevertheless seek to guide their lives by certain ultimate principles of conduct or ideals. More and more this is indeed what religion is coming to mean in the United States.

(1) *Emphasis on conduct.*—The old doctrines in regard to God, Jesus Christ, the Church and the Sacraments are of course there and are strictly adhered to by some, but they are also being reinterpreted in such a way as to lay the emphasis rather on conduct and service of fellowmen. The feeling is that a religion which begins and ends with scrupulous and rigid conformity to doctrine and ritual is often a cloak to hypocrisy and dishonesty in conduct. The American therefore applies a practical test to one's professions and asks for results in everyday life. If you have faith he says, show me your works. The typical American does not interest himself in metaphysical problems. He believes only what he can see in effect in practice. If it pleases any one to speculate regarding things beyond this life let him indulge in this luxury, but the more important part of religion according to him is what difference religion makes actually in the living of life.

(2) *Material Welfare as important as Spiritual Welfare.*—Naturally therefore he is not interested so much in the salvation of his soul in some future world, as in the improvement of the present world in every aspect, the material aspect just as much as any other. The religious man must interest himself in food, housing and labour conditions of the poor just as much as in their spiritual welfare. To him the material aspect is as important as the spiritual, and as it is much more clamant and visible than the spiritual he is apt to regard it if anything as even more important. This makes his outlook on life very different from ours. We are apt to regard the material side of our lives as temporary and impermanent, and at best to be at-

tended to only as means to a full spiritual life. We regard the body as but a garment to be shed off when the soul attains perfection. It has for us therefore the status merely of means, and not that of end. When a bodily desire comes in conflict with a spiritual one, we are certain that the spiritual must have the right of way. Nay more, we are even inclined to hold that the body must be curbed if the spirit is to develop. So we crucify the flesh and with bodily suffering we hope to achieve spiritual bliss.

Not so the American. He believes in the Greek ideal of a healthy mind in a healthy body. He regards asceticism as morbid, and holds that a healthy spiritual life is impossible unless the body were in health and comfort. Fasts undertaken for a spiritual purpose such as are common in this country and have lately drawn the attention of the world because of Gandhiji are for him therefore unintelligible. They are at best hypnotic political stunts aiming definitely at material ends. He believes rather that unless a man eats well he cannot be at peace with himself and therefore cannot think, much less have strength or inclination for spiritual problems and enterprises. The Y.M.C.A. with its emblem of a red triangle, each side being equal and representing body, mind and spirit truly represents his attitude towards the body in relation to the spirit. There should be an all-round development of all three, none of them being allowed to crush the others. It is no wonder then that the missionary in India thinks that for hundred per cent efficiency in his work he must have a palatial bungalow to live in, abundant food, an army of servants, and a car to rush about in so that he can cover this vast land speedily with the gospel of the lowly Nazarene who himself could not go beyond little Galilee, as he merely walked and had no place where to lay his head. Jesus walked; but his gospel has been heard throughout the face of the earth, whether with the aid of the missionary or in spite of it. Such is the power of the spirit. This is a lesson which America and the West in general have yet to learn.

(3) *The Social Gospel.*—As American religion is rooted in the things of this world, it concerns itself chiefly with character and conduct and with social uplift. It lays great emphasis on improving society and the environment rather than on improving the individual, for it is thought that the environment plays an all-important part in making the individual what he is. Change the environment which makes a man selfish, greedy and

dishonest, and in that very fact you will find that the individuals growing up in it are transformed and are no more selfish, greedy or dishonest. Emphasis is therefore placed on what is called the social gospel.

(4) *Control by Vested Interests.*—This however is dangerous for it must sooner or later bring the man who would take his religion seriously into conflict with the powers that be—whether it be the State or whether it be Big Business, for there is no doubt that if there is poverty, exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth, it is owing to the fact that the State and Big Business are in league with each other to maintain the present unequal economic order for the benefit of the powerful few. The churches as a rule, it must be said to their shame, have knuckled under and have not had courage enough to give a bold lead to the people. This is because they are under the control of vested interests. They depend on the rich for their funds. How then can the poverty-stricken parson raise his voice against the rich? On the other hand, he pipes the tune which will please his benefactor. He exhorts his congregation to be honest, conscientious, dutiful and law-abiding—all virtues which the capitalist wants in his workmen. And the capitalist continues his patronage, knowing that whether it will bring him reward in the next world or not, it certainly does bring him return in this world by providing him honest, contented and God-fearing model workmen. It is because of this that organised religion has been unable to make itself felt against economic exploitation of the weak by the strong.

As against this criticism, the plea of the Church has been that it is not its business to dabble in economics. It can only lay down the principles of religion and leave the individual to apply them to various spheres of conduct for himself. While agreeing in the main with this contention, it must be pointed out that in the face of manifest evil the religious leader cannot, except at the cost of betraying his religion, afford to keep his mouth shut. One does not expect from him a discourse on economic theories, it is true, but one rightly expects him to denounce patent injustice, dishonesty and exploitation. Otherwise he will be guilty of shameful neglect, like the high priest whom Jesus condemned in the Parable of the Good Samaritan and who on finding a man lying by the wayside, wounded and be-

reft of his belongings by robbers, did nothing for him but walk-ed by on the other side.

(5) *Separation of Politics from Religion*.—Similarly in the political realm, so far as the weaker nations go which are struggling for freedom from exploitation by the stronger, the American's sympathies are instinctively with the weaker, as he himself had fled from Europe and further and further into the interior of the United States for freedom from oppression. But you cannot expect the churches in America to act indepen-dently of the State in this regard. Their first loyalty is evidently to their State. Every church has a big American flag flying by its altar, as though to remind the people that they are Ameri-can citizens first before they are Christians. So the church Christian is usually far too loyal to the State to allow his reli-gion to go against the politics of the State in the international sphere. America cannot be altogether blamed for this, for every country today pursues its own selfish national interests. At the same time one cannot easily excuse the churches in America for failing to give the right lead to their people when the policy followed by the Government whether in regard to war in general or in regard to exploitation of weaker peoples, was contrary to the teachings of Jesus. The result is the utter futility of orga-nised religion in America in the political as in the economic sphere.

Orthodoxy of course seeks to defend itself by the well known trick of distinguishing between religion and polities, and saying that religion must leave polities alone. Perhaps no greater fraud has been practised by the politicians of the West than thus conveniently banning religion from the sphere of polities. One may as well say that religion and robbery are two distinct spheres, and therefore religion must not interfere with robbers but leave them free to do their marauding! What amazes one is to hear otherwise sensible people seriously advocating this theory. What indeed can a religion be which is content to func-tion within the cloistered walls of a church but must keep its mouth shut in the streets, or in the market place, or in the coun-cils of the great? Applying the practical American test, a religion which is thus ineffective in human affairs may as well not exist.

(6) *Social Amelioration*.—American religion while pru-dently leaving as outside its scope economic and political pro-

blems which are apt to bring it into conflict with the powers that be, contents itself with finding remedial measures for social and economic ills. Afraid to tackle these problems at the root, it seeks nevertheless to do what it can to ameliorate conditions of poverty, ignorance and ill-health. Thus it spares no pains to organise community centres which will provide opportunities for entertainment, recreation and education in slum areas, to run innumerable schools for normal children as well as special schools for the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the crippled and the mentally defective, to found libraries and research institutions, to establish hospitals to look after the sick, retreats for the old and the infirm, homes for orphans and for fallen women, and missions for work abroad. America is rich in institutions such as these, and in so far as it proceeds from an honest desire to do what is possible for the unprivileged, it is praiseworthy.

CENTRALISED CHARITY

But efficient as charitable institutions may be in their own way, they lack the human touch which makes all the difference in the world to a man in need. Take for example the way a man who is down and out is treated in the United States. The law prohibits begging and so no beggars are to be found in the streets of American cities, but that is not to say that there are no destitutes. There are; only they are forced to enter work-houses. I saw one in New York City and I cannot forget the angry expression on the faces of the men lined up. They resented our curiosity in their hour of destitution and humiliation, and seemed to rebel at the economic system which drove them to the work-house. Here the new-comer was registered, medically examined, his clothes taken from him and fumigated, he was made to bathe, and change into work-house uniform, and then to line up for his soup, vegetables and bread. He got a clean bed along with numerous others in a hall, and given work whereby he paid for his food. A certain amount from his wage was credited to his account from day to day to be given to him when he left the work-house. His history was recorded and, when possible, employment was found for him. All this sounds very good. And yet work-houses were most unpopular. No one went there of his own free will. It was more or less like a prison where the police took vagrants and people who had no visible means of livelihood. They were given hard work and very little in the way of wages.

The treatment they got was all too institutional, and heartless. They were labelled and numbered and dealt with in the mass. Their physical needs were attended to but their mental wounds and sufferings were nobody's concern. After all man is a spiritual being. He forgets all his physical suffering if he can find a balm which will soothe his anguished heart. What he wants is not so much food and shelter, although these are essential enough. He craves even more for the human touch, the cheering word, the genial smile. These are to a man in distress what bring life and joy and hope. But this is precisely what is lacking in institutionalised charity. These work-houses are run from municipal funds. But even in the case of institutions run on public charity, all the contact the rich donor has with the institutions he helps is to receive reports from them periodically and to send his cheque to them year after year. In this kind of large-scale centralised charity, there is no personal contact of donor with recipient. It is only a matter of money given and handled in an impersonal way. It cannot therefore bless him that gives and him that takes as in the case of decentralised charity, where the giver knows the individual whom he is helping, and with his money gives a little of himself. I do not say that institutional charity has nothing good in it. Or that personal charity may not be degrading, but what I mean is that effective charity is not a mere matter of giving money and catering to one's physical wants but even more of giving oneself to the needy and healing his mental wounds. And this is not possible in centralised factory-made charity which is so to say untouched by hand, efficient as a steam roller, soulless and mechanical. One can illustrate the same truth in regard to orphanages, homes for the old and the infirm, and other institutions.

Further, what is worse, this kind of institutional charity gives the rich the comfortable feeling that they are doing their duty by the needy by doling out periodic sums of money, whereas as a matter of fact they themselves are living on exploitation of the poor, ruthless cut-throat competition and unscrupulous methods of business. Charity based on such loot and ill-gotten gain is nothing short of cruel hypocrisy, and yet this is one of the important forms in which American religion expresses itself.

AMERICAN RELIGION TOO OBSESSED BY OUTER RESULTS

If we may lay the finger on the weak spot in American re-

ligion it is that it concerns itself more with achieving outer material results than with inner spiritual transformation. America like the West in general is in regard to religion still in the early stages of development. As in the case of the child, it is absorbed in the outer world and believes that the test of religion is objective and capable of being weighed and measured in terms of statistics relating to institutions, amounts spent, and number of people served. But alas, this is not religion in its entirety though it may be a part of it. The better part is not that of Martha who was busy about many things in order to feed Jesus, but that of Mary who sat quietly by Him communing with Him. The outer results are in themselves of little avail. They have value only as revealing the inner frame of mind of a self losing itself in the other, and this to my mind is the core of religion. In our country, it had always been insisted that the essence of religion when viewed from the side of the individual is to overcome the private, narrow self, or *ahamkara*, and to expand into the life of the universe. On the other hand, to content oneself with merely achievements in the outer world without overcoming one's private self is to mistake the mere outer crust of religion for its inner substance. Giving money is easy, especially when one has an over-abundance of it and by giving it one obtains name and fame, but to give one's self is not so easy. So all religions demand of the devotee not the mere fruit, or the flower, or the money, but with such offering the devotion of his heart. The material offering has value only as a symbol of the inner devotion. This it seems to me is the contribution that India has to make to Western religious thought and practice—the renunciation of self and all desire for private gain.

LESSONS FOR US

But this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from American religion. We are apt to go to the other extreme from America and to withdraw into ourselves and to think that we can save ourselves by looking within ourselves and away from the world of need. To this evil tendency the practical American test of faith by works is a good corrective.

Further, as at the basis of a nation's culture is its religion, it is most important that as in America the principles of the religion of our own country should be clearly understood and systematically expounded to children by interpreting in an elemen-

tary way in the home, in the school and in the temple, our scriptures, folk lore, religious history, art, music, ritual, festivals and social institutions. These are the channels through which religious heritage is passed on from generation to generation. But each generation must understand them afresh in the light of its own day. The Americans have evolved a very efficient way of doing this for their own religion. Unless we also tackle this problem for ourselves, our culture will sooner or later become a dead weight of tradition and superstition hindering us from progress. But when it is understood and assimilated it will revolutionise our present westernised modes of thinking, and freeing us from intellectual bondage to the West, open up for us new vistas of thought and conduct.

To illustrate this in the field of education, today we are looking to the West for our ideals in education and recently there has been a great deal of interest created in us in the Montessori method. But if, as I have claimed, the essence of the religion of our people is in overcoming the private self and its desires, we cannot accept blindly the Montessori principle that the education of the child must be guided by its desires. The Western philosophy of life which underlies the Montessori doctrine is the ideal of a full life, life of many loves and many hates, a life of more and more desire finding expression in greater and greater complexity of life and a higher and higher standard of living as it is called. But our ancient ideal is very different. It is, as I have tried to point out, a renunciation of self and desire. If this ideal is still to be with us, then our aim in education will be correspondingly different. It will be to teach the child to control self and curb desire. How completely the emphasis changes! Today, if the world is faced with bloodshed and destruction it is because of uncontrolled desire. To live according to our own desires requires no training. It is the law of the jungle. But the essence of religion and good breeding is, it seems to me, to control self out of consideration for others. This at any rate is what our fathers taught, and I believe it is something which needs very much to be kept in mind today by those who have the responsibility of educating the young not only in our own country but also in the rest of the world.

A FEW interesting experiences remain to be mentioned before we bid goodbye to this New World. I did not travel much in the United States as travelling was very expensive. But I went as a delegate to a huge Student Convention which was held in the winter of 1919-20 at Des Moines, Iowa, in the Middle West. This gave me an opportunity of seeing a little of the interior of the United States, but not very much for at that time the whole distance from Hartford to Des Moines was covered with snow, and I did not halt except at Chicago and Niagara.

CHICAGO STOCK YARDS

Chicago, the second largest city of America, was built on the edge of Lake Michigan. The drive by the lake was beautiful, otherwise there was nothing striking to a sight-seer rushing through the streets of Chicago in a bus. The city was much like New York with huge sky scrapers. I visited the famous Stock Yards where thousands of cattle were slaughtered for meat. There were miles and miles of yards where these unfortunate animals were kept and fattened. When their time came they were taken to the slaughter house, and young, sleek and well-fed, they marched one by one to the room where a man with a heavy hammer dealt a blow to them on the forehead between the two eyes. It was a work of a second. The animal fell unconscious, and when it fell the floor tilted and let the animal slide under the barrier into the next room where it was cut, flayed and dealt with in innumerable ways, going from department to department, where every one of its parts was made use of, and finally came out in various forms packed and ready for the market. It was a huge organisation and the animals were slaughtered even as we stood there at the rate of one per minute.

The memory of the hammer falling on the innocent animal still haunts me, and makes me wonder why it is necessary for men to feed on other animals. Surely we can have all the nourishment we require from the vegetable kingdom. Plants also have life, it is true, but they do not have the same order of consciousness and capacity to anticipate pain as animals, fish and birds. Besides, animals and birds unlike plants seem to

miss their loved ones if removed from them. When man can live just as well on the lower orders of life, one feels that there is no justification for his taking the life of the higher orders of creation, just as for instance a man is less justified in eating his fellowmen than in eating animals, fish or poultry. India had come to this conclusion over 2000 years ago, when through the rise of Buddhism and Jainism meat eating was abolished among the higher castes in many parts of the land. The civilisation of the West is by contrast after all only of yesterday, and in course of time with gradual refinement of spirit perhaps America, and the West in general, may still see the moral wrong of unnecessarily taking animal life for the purposes of food. And then what about the Chicago meat-packing industry? Its disappearance will certainly not be a blot on American civilisation.

NIAGARA FALLS

After Chicago we halted at Buffalo to see the Niagara Falls. I had seen any number of pictures of them, and so they were not for me an unfamiliar spectacle. But seeing them, one thought as when one saw the Taj Mahal at Agra, that pictures failed altogether to convey their majestic grandeur and beauty. In seeing for the first time famous objects or persons one is always afraid that the original may not come up to one's expectations. But faced with the Niagara Falls, as when faced with the Taj, one felt that "the half had not been told."

It was mid-winter and hoar-frost had laid its icy finger on this ever-moving, ever-tumbling stream. It was a fight between the cold stillness and rigidity of death and the joyous, noisy, rush and gurgle of life. On the rocks at the edge of the Falls where the flow was slight and not more than a trickle, death had succeeded; the falls stood as though suddenly arrested, in the form of solid inert icicles hanging from the rocks, as though in the very act of flowing from the rock they were congealed and turned into a bead curtain of ice. It was beautiful to behold—streaks and streaks of ice hanging from the rocks. The river on top was covered with a thick sheet of ice, but underneath the surface of ice was the living stream which when it came to the edge of the cliff came tumbling down with a thunder and a roar as though triumphant over the cold bonds of death that sought to hold it under. And with the water came also huge chunks of ice which broke with the fall and were thrown around and

beaten about in the milky churning of the rapids. It was a scene of marvellous power and you stood aghast, and reflected on man's hopeless weakness in the face of the tremendous fury of Nature. But not for long, for man in this New World had learnt to harness this great energy, and the power station nearby where this energy was converted into electricity was a witness to the fact that in this universe an even greater power than that of physical nature existed, namely, the power of the intellect. Man was in physique only a few feet in stature and yet by his intellect he was able to control this immeasurable energy and bring it to his use. Young America, as already pointed out, is absorbed in conquering the outer environment and has still to turn inward, and appreciate the marvels and powers of the spirit.

The Falls were over a mile in width and 167 feet in height. The trees that stood by were bereft of leaves, but each branch and twig was covered with a thin sheet of ice, which made the trees and shrubs appear as though they were made of glass. When the wind blew, they shook and sparkled, and dazzled the eyes. It seemed unreal and one wondered whether like Alice in Wonderland one had suddenly become transported to a fairy land where all the trees were glass and all the land was thick, white ice-cream! Niagara in summer may be grand, but give me always the Falls in the grips of winter, for then to unsurpassed grandeur were added a delicate fairy-like beauty and a haunting suggestion of deep unfathomable mystery.

HIKING

Another experience I shall not easily forget is that of hiking. During my first summer at Silver Bay, two girls arrived who had hiked all the way to California and back during the summer vacation, that is they had trudged on foot and got passing motorists to give them lifts from one town to another. My Swiss friend and I thought we would try hiking back from Silver Bay. We carried the essentials in a knapsack, I wore my colourful turban to arrest attention on the road, and my friend had a big placard on his back with the words: "To New York. Give us a lift." After we had walked three or four miles out of Silver Bay, an empty motor truck picked us up and jolted us along as far as Albany, a distance may be of about 20 miles. We slept the night at the Y.M.C.A. and started out again the next morning. We walked on and on till noon, were hot and hungry,

scores of cars passed us, we beckoned for some to stop and give us a lift, but all to no effect. Instead of halting for us, they seemed to put on speed at the sight of us. We stopped at a country restaurant for something to eat and when we related our ill luck we were told that it was useless to attempt hiking in that area, for there had been hold-ups by highway robbers on that road and motorists had been warned against halting at strangers' requests on the way. We were advised against proceeding further, and from our experience that morning we realised that there was little hope of our getting lifts, and so we made for the nearest railway station, and consoled ourselves, as the train hurried us along to our destination, that after all we had hiked part of the way, and could now rest our weary legs and travel in comfort for the rest of the journey.

DEPARTURE FROM HARTFORD

The three-year course for which I had come to America having been successfully completed at the end of May, I made ready for my departure. As I intended to study further in Britain where the term did not commence till October, I decided to spend the summer in Silver Bay and go from there to Montreal, which was not far off, and sail from Montreal to Glasgow, thus seeing a little of Canada and the northern route across the Atlantic. I booked my passage on a Canadian Liner, packed up my heavy luggage, left them in my room in College and instructed the American Express Company at Hartford to send the luggage to reach me on board the ship by which I was sailing from Montreal. The luggage bore labels giving my name and cabin number. I went as usual with only my suit case to Silver Bay. After three months in Silver Bay I left for Montreal.

REACTION TO SIGNS OF BRITISH EMPIRE IN MONTREAL

When I got to the Canadian frontier, the first thing that struck me was the distinction of railway compartments into first, second and third class, and the British Crown painted on the carriages. I realised then with a shock and regret that that was the end of American democracy for me. I was back in British territory. No more talk of liberty, equality and fraternity. I was a British subject and there was no getting away from it. The crown indicating the supremacy of man over fellowman was

a reminder of one's subjection. The first, second and third class carriages pointed to a perpetuation of the Old World distinctions of inequality between man and man. How different was it when I entered the United States under the shadow of the magnificent Statue of Liberty, and thought how nice to walk with my head up as the equal of any other. But now the British Crown weighed on my spirit like iron fetters and I thought with a heavy heart—alas! I am once more a subject, not a free citizen as the people I left behind in America, and what is worse, a subject of a foreign power.

Montreal did not attract me much, and the sight of the Union Jack on buildings made me draw into myself. I felt I had enough of it. Little did the British flag have such a curious effect on me elsewhere. But the three years in America made all the difference. For there I had tasted of freedom, and the symbols of the old imperialism to which I was quite accustomed in India galled on me now in the most unexpected way.

To my surprise I found quite a strong French element in Montreal. Half the population seemed to speak French and I wondered how they submitted to being subjects of the British Empire. Judging from Montreal, Canada was not half as prosperous or go-ahead as the United States, and I thought that perhaps it was the breaking away from the apron strings of Britain that made it possible for America to advance unimpeded and to become the wealthiest and the most powerful country of the world. India's salvation also seemed to lie in her shaking off the British yoke and struggling with her problems herself unaided.

All these thoughts showed what America had done for me. I had never bothered about politics or the national movement in India. But now I had drunk of the wine of freedom. No one preached it to me. It was in the air in which I lived and moved and had my being during my three years of student life in America, and I was transformed and thought new thoughts and dreamed strange dreams. If America taught me nothing else, it taught me the virtues of self-help, self-respect and sturdy independence, and no more would I of my own free will co-operate with any form of bondage or suppression.

MY LUGGAGE

As soon as I got on board I rushed to my cabin to see if my luggage had arrived, and there was my trunk which I had

left in my room in my College, safely put away under my bed, and my two wooden cases of books in the hold. I admired the marvellous organisation and business methods of America which made it possible for me to entrust my heavy luggage three months previously at Hartford and without further worry to find it ready and waiting for me on board the ship in a Canadian port. Nowhere else in the world have I come across such efficiency.

STEAMER LETTER

A happy surprise awaited me on board, namely a steamer letter from my friends in Silver Bay. A few of them had got together and filled up two or three long sheets of paper with personal messages of farewell from each. I read and re-read them. There was no one I knew on board and so this letter was a comfort, for it left me in thought in the company of these several friends on land.

AMONGST ICEBERGS

Soon we left Montreal and glided along the river St. Lawrence on whose mouth Montreal was situated. Before long we passed Quebec and its imposing cliffs and were in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, from which we got out into the Atlantic through a strait, with Newfoundland on our right and the coast of Labrador on our left. This part of the Atlantic was very cold, for we were not very far from Greenland. Soon at a distance we saw something like a white cloud in the horizon. It was a small iceberg, which we passed. It caused a great deal of excitement amongst the passengers. But the next day we came across a much bigger one, which looked like a great hill of alum, about twice or three times the size of our ship. It looked as though it were a fixed mountain in the ocean, but it moved of course, very slowly, although the movement could not be seen by us. We passed quite close to it, and the waves our ship produced dashed on its sides as though it were solid rock. It was interesting but at the same time terrifying, for we were in the iceberg area and we remembered the Titanic disaster, and looked into the icy water and did not quite like the thought of drowning in it. What was worse the icebergs produced a fog all round with their evaporation, and for a day or two we could see nothing in front. Our ship blew the fog horn all day,

and at night put on a bright head-light to peer into the darkness and to warn off approaching ships.

AURORA BOREALIS

One night, when the sky was perfectly clear and the stars were out, there was a beautiful display of the Aurora Borealis or the Northern Lights. The lights shimmered and quivered all over the sky, some of them in pale green, pink and yellow. It went on thus for two or three hours. As there was no obstruction to hide the view as on land, and all before us was one black inky water upto the horizon, the lights could be seen to great advantage, and seemed very bright by contrast. They were electric in their manifestation like sheet lightning, but instead of disappearing with the twinkle of an eye as lightning does, somehow got arrested in the sky and remained flickering and trembling in little waves of light, and moving from one side of the sky to another. And the strangest thing of all, like Alice's Cheshire cat which vanished leaving only the smile behind, the lights flooded the sky like lightning but there was not a cloud to be seen anywhere nearby. They were said to occur only on perfectly clear and cloudless nights.

These Northern Lights formed a fitting end to my adventure to the New World, which like them filled my mind with fascination for its ever-changing, ever-moving civilisation, electric in its speed and live as a live wire, but lacking as it seemed in depth and stability, too much engrossed as it was in outer accomplishment to trouble about the hidden and permanent things of the spirit. At the same time, behind the aggressiveness and vulgarity of commercial materialism there was in this New World an instinctive idealism and freedom from convention, such as that which characterises youth. That was America's saving grace.

A few days, and our ship waited at the mouth of the river Clyde for a tide to take us to Glasgow.



